

Christopher wants strong Iran sanctions

WASHINGTON (AP) — The United States should stop permitting American subsidiaries to buy and sell Iranian oil because that policy handicaps American diplomacy, Secretary of State Warren Christopher said Sunday. "We need to toughen our sanctions," Mr. Christopher said, adding that he would espouse that view during administration discussions this week on U.S. policy towards Iran. "I regard Iran as a terrorist state," Mr. Christopher said in a television interview. "They're really an international bad actor, so I think we need to take a very strong stand against them. The fact that we are engaged in trading, the fact that subsidiaries of our oil companies can purchase oil there and sell it to Europe is a handicap to us in dealing with other countries." When I go to another country and say, "stop giving concessions to Iran," they throw this back in my face." As one example, he discussed the ongoing dispute with Russia over the sale of Russian nuclear reactor technology to Iran, saying President Bill Clinton will press Russian President Boris Yeltsin to stop the deal when he visits Moscow later this month.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
 جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية. الراي.

Group says Gulf fails to protect workers

CAIRO (AP) — An Egyptian human rights group charged Sunday that Egyptians working in the Gulf have been subjected to suspect killings, arbitrary detentions and torture. It also said the Gulf system requiring "sponsorship" of foreign workers was tantamount to slavery and demanded that it be abolished. It accused the governments in Egypt and the Gulf of failing to act to protect the expatriate workers. The report by the Egyptian Organisation for Human Rights estimated there were some 900,000 Egyptians working in Gulf countries, mainly in Saudi Arabia but also in Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates. The group said it has investigated numerous complaints from the workers over the past three years, including 19 deaths blamed on torture or deliberate killings. Other cases related to arbitrary arrests and mistreatment in jail, it said. The report said the Gulf countries have not signed the major international human rights conventions and "lack the standard safeguards against false imprisonment and arbitrary detention."

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Kabariti meets Musa, Mu'alleem

WASHINGTON (Petra) — Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Al Kabariti met with his Egyptian counterpart Amr Musa in Washington on Sunday. Mr. Kabariti and Mr. Musa discussed the outcome of recent Jordanian-Egyptian contacts and coordinating the two countries' stands on joint Arab action and the Middle East peace process. Also on Sunday, Mr. Kabariti met with Syrian Ambassador to the U.S. Walid Al Mu'alleem and discussed with him the latest developments in the Syrian-Israeli negotiations. Mr. Kabariti reiterated to Mr. Mu'alleem Jordan's support of Syrian rights to regain its lands occupied by Israel since June 4, 1967.

Three die in arson attack in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — A young stateless Arab man set fire to his family home in Al Jahra in northern Kuwait, killing his step-mother and two half-brothers, newspapers reported Sunday. The man's father was seriously injured in the fire and is in a critical condition in hospital, they said. The arsonist, whose identity was not revealed, wanted to protest bad treatment at the hands of his step-mother, police said. Seven other people in the house jumped out of the windows to safety.

Sudan rebels say they repulsed attacks

NAIROBI (R) — The rebel South Sudan Independence Movement (SSIM) said on Sunday its forces had repulsed an attack by Sudan government forces on Lafon, 120 kilometres east of Juba, south Sudan's largest town. A SSIM spokesman said in a statement issued in Nairobi on Friday, capturing its commander, Colonel Khalid Mohammedi Osman, two tanks and immediately possible to independently confirm the SSIM report, which said the incident showed that the ceasefire recently announced by the Sudanese government was "a fake."

UNIFIL chief takes office

NAQOURA (AFP) — The new commander of U.N. Interim Forces in Lebanon UNIFIL, Polish general Stanislas Wazinski, took up his post Sunday at a ceremony at the force's headquarters in Naqoura. Gen. Wazinski, who took over from Fijian Gen. Wan Kawsu, is the fifth commander of the 5,000-strong UNIFIL since it was created in 1978. Gen. Wazinski was previously Polish military attaché in Washington. "My ambition is for peace to be achieved during my mandate," the 40-year-old general said. "I will do all I can to fulfil the task I have been entrusted with."

New 'prophet' in Sinai ends up in jail

CAIRO (AFP) — Police have arrested an Egyptian pharmacist in the Sinai desert who claimed to be a new prophet sent to unite Islam, Christianity and Judaism into one religion, the weekly Rose Al Yousef reported Sunday. Abbas Mahmoud Al Sayed, 42, originally from Alexandria, moved to Al Tor in south Sinai five months ago and opened a pharmacy there. A few weeks later he began preaching his "prophecy." He told inhabitants on a Friday that "an angel appeared to me and chose me as a messenger to you." "God picked me to join the three (monotheistic) religions into one and to gather around it the people of Sinai, the birthplace of the prophets." Proselytizing is illegal under Egyptian law. Once in the custody of Sinai police, Mr. Sayed refused to talk to a sheikh from Al Azhar, the highest Sunni Muslim authority, who asked that Mr. Sayed be isolated so as "not to influence the people."

Amman meeting studies structure of regional development bank

Institution expected to be announced at October economic summit despite differing approaches

By P.V. Vivekanand
 Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Efforts to set up a Middle East development bank got into grappling with the nuts and bolts of the structure of the proposal in Amman with a one-day meeting on Sunday, with the U.S., Japan, key Arab countries and Israel pressing for an entity with its own capital and some European countries expressing reservations, delegates said.

However, there was a consensus that the difference was not expected to be a serious hurdle in setting up a regional institution and mechanism to finance development projects in the Middle East and North Africa as called for in the final statement issued by an economic summit held in Casablanca, Morocco, late last year.

A good number of dele-

gates, particularly American and Israeli officials, said they expected the announcement of the establishment of the bank to be made in the Amman economic conference scheduled to be held in October as a follow-up to the Casablanca gathering.

"We believe that the proposals are very complementary" despite the differing views over whether the proposed bank should have its own capital, said Susan Lavine, deputy assistant secretary of the U.S. Treasury Department.

Delegates said some European countries believed that the existing financial institutions — such as the European development bank (EIB), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the World Bank and the International Financing Corporation (IFC) — were sufficient to offer financing for economic de-

velopment of the Middle East and North Africa.

They also argue that setting up a Middle Eastern development bank is "a time consuming process" since it would require official endorsement by all governments concerned and that the establishment of a bank with a commercial nature was "very cumbersome."

They cite the example of EBRD, which was officially set up in 1990 but took two years before it could approve the first loan. "Even the loan has not been disbursed yet, almost five years after the bank was established," commented a European diplomat.

However, Ms. Lavine and Al Larson, deputy assistant secretary of state for economic affairs, told an informal press briefing that the U.S. was firmly behind the idea that the bank should have a capital of \$5 billion, with a

paid-in capital of about \$1.25 billion every year for four or five years.

Noting that the proposal to set up the bank was still in negotiating stages, both of them expressed optimism that the differences could be bridged as deliberations get ahead.

"We will have agreement for such an institution before the Amman economic summit" scheduled to be held Oct. 31-Nov. 1, said Ms. Lavine.

Ms. Lavine said the American contribution to the capital of the bank could be around \$75 million per year depending on structures and formulas to be agreed on in further deliberations.

U.S. diplomats said meanwhile that a pledge of \$75 million that U.S. President Bill Clinton made, in an address to the Jordanian par-

(Continued on page 7)

8 killed in Gaza blast blamed on Hamas militants making bomb

GAZA CITY (Agencies) — Militants preparing a bomb set off a blast Sunday that ripped through their hideout, killing eight Palestinians including a leader of an underground group that has carried out suicide bombings against Israel, officials said.

Fumes from a mysterious white powder, believed to have been used in the bomb-making process, overcame two police officers and five bystanders after the bag was opened. All were treated and released from a hospital.

Brigadier General Ghazi Jabali, head of Palestinian police in Gaza City, said police found seven unexploded bombs, an automatic rifle, grenades and a plastic bag with 25 kilograms of poisonous powder in the second-floor apartment in a crowded residential neighbourhood.

A police bomb expert walked from the apartment, clutching three canisters studded with nails used to enhance the killing power of bombs.

"They were preparing an explosive when one bomb blew up," Gen. Jabali said.

"This shows that those in the apartment had a total disregard for the lives of those living around them."

The Hamas fundamentalist group's military wing denied its members had been preparing explosives and, in a leaflet, vowed "swift and painful retaliation."

Although Gen. Jabali listed only four dead, officials at Gaza's Shifa hospital said a total of eight people were killed, including an 18-month-old baby, and two others wounded.

Heads and body parts were blown up to 300 metres away. Rescuers carried severed limbs in plastic buckets and bags from the three-storey building whose middle floor was blown out.

Police said the bomb-makers belonged to the Islamic Hamas group. A Hamas spokesman denied that they were making bombs and said the men had been blown up by unknown bombers as part of a plot.

Hamas opposes the Palestine Liberation Organisation's peace deal with Israel and has mounted suicide bombings against the Jewish

state, including an attack last October that killed 22 people on a Tel Aviv bus.

But Hamas has reached a tacit understanding with PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat not to launch attacks in the PLO self-rule areas of the Gaza Strip and Jericho.

Last month Israeli authorities said they had foiled a Palestinian bombing plot when they intercepted a Gaza truck carrying explosives in southern Israel. No one claimed responsibility for sending the vehicle into Israel.

Hamas spokesman Mahmoud Al Zahar told angry Gaza residents that Hamas was not making bombs in their neighbourhood.

"This is a plot. They were assassinated, it was carried out by an explosives expert, this happened before, and when we discover who was behind it, his fate will be as bad as this," Dr. Zahar said. He did not say who he thought was behind the blast. Police later stopped him from speaking.

Police sources said at least two Qassam members were

among the dead.

"We suspect Hamas, and most probably Kamal Khail is among the dead," one police source said. Khail was a prominent member of Qassam. One witness said he had carried out Khail's head.

The apartment building and surrounding area in the city's Sheikh Radwan neighbourhood were littered with parts of bodies.

A Reuters reporter said he saw one head 300 metres from the scene.

"There are about eight people dead. We still don't have the exact number of dead people. Some children are among the dead," the police source said.

A police officer brought out four bombs, which looked like small gas cylinders with charges attached, and defused one in front of onlookers. Police later cleared people from the area.

Police also carried out an M-16 automatic rifle and a bag of explosives.

There was no official comment from Mr. Arafat's office.

(Continued on page 7)

Israel: Syria agreed to restrain Hizbollah

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Israel said on Sunday Syria had agreed to restrain Hizbollah guerrillas in Lebanon who fired rockets at the Jewish state last Friday.

Syria, the main power broker in Lebanon, also said it was still committed to a 1993 U.S.-mediated agreement preventing the targeting of civilians.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's spokesman, Oded Ben-Ami, said the Syrian message was relayed through U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher.

"The Syrians said they still back the understandings reached after (Israel's) operation accountability "and will act to calm the situation," he said.

He said Israel asked for Mr. Christopher's mediation after Hizbollah fired dozens of Katyusha rockets on the Jewish state on Friday, killing a 17-year-old boy and injuring 12 people.

The Syrian state-run newspaper Tishrin said that Syria was not behind the latest violence and charged that it was Israel who violated existing agreements on actions in Lebanon.

Mr. Christopher negotiated an understanding between Israel and Syria in 1993 that ended Hizbollah rocket attacks on northern Israel

and Israeli shelling of Lebanese villages in South Lebanon.

Under the settlement, both sides agreed that civilians would not be attacked. Syria opposes Israel's occupation of a southern strip of Lebanon that the Jewish state carved out to prevent cross-border attacks in 1985.

Mr. Christopher said Sunday he was "somewhat encouraged" by Israeli-Syrian peace talks and had tried to cool tensions after the rocket attack on Israel, and Israel's retaliation.

"The parties are engaged in very serious negotiations. They're now talking about security issues, which I think are probably the toughest of all the issues," he said in a television interview.

Mr. Christopher said Wednesday that he was involved in negotiations in Washington between Israeli and Syria ambassadors, Itamar Rabinovich and Walid Mualllem, respectively.

"I've been working through this weekend trying to cool down the situation," said Mr. Christopher.

Syria said Sunday that the military escalation threatened the Middle East peace process.

Negotiations between

(Continued on page 7)

3 Gaza policemen held after death in custody

GAZA (Agencies) — The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) said on Sunday it will try members of its secret police in the self-ruled Gaza Strip for involvement in the violent death of a Palestinian prisoner in their custody.

Freih Abu Medein, head of justice for the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), said members of the Palestinian intelligence force, who were questioning a prisoner accused of collaborating with Israel, were believed to be directly involved in taking him out of prison and killing him on Saturday.

"Interrogators of the Palestinian intelligence were arrested today and will be interrogated to explain why they took out of prison a prisoner accused of killing six Fatah Hawks activists, and who was found dead while in their custody," Mr. Abu Medein told Reuters.

The prisoner, Mohammad Al Jundi, 32, from Gaza City, was accused of aiding Israeli soldiers who shot dead six activists of PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat's Fatah Hawks faction in Gaza's Jabalya refugee camp in March 1994, six months after the peace deal with Israel was signed.

Jundi was killed on Saturday at the site of the shooting deaths of the six activists, a

senior PLO judicial source said.

Mr. Abu Medein said in February a total of 17 suspected collaborators would be tried in the PNA's new military court.

He said at the time, the 17 had confessed to aiding Israelis in the killings of the six Fatah men and of an Islamic Jihad activist in a separate incident.

"The (Jundi) killing interfered with a major court case," Mr. Abu Medein said on Sunday, adding that the military trials would begin this week.

Jundi's body was discovered in Jabalya camp late Saturday, Palestinian prosecutor Khaled Al Kidra said. It is not known who took him out of prison or killed him.

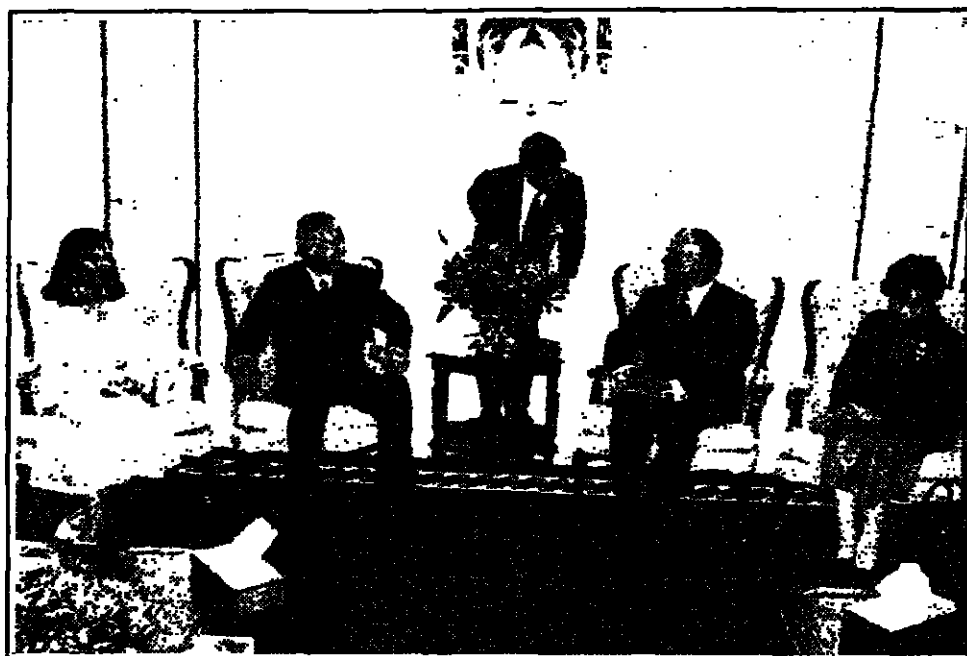
"We immediately launched an inquiry to find those responsible," Mr. Kidra told AFP.

"We will act with the greatest severity against all those who have broken the law. We want to know who killed this man."

Three policemen were being questioned, Mr. Kidra confirmed.

Jundi was a member of a group of 12 Palestinians accused of having helped "spe-

(Continued on page 7)



Their Royal Highnesses Crown Prince Hassan and Taiwanese President Lee Teng-hui and his wife Lee Sing-won on Sunday receive wife Lee Sing-won

Regent, Princess Sarvath receive Lee and his wife

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, and Her Royal Highness Princess Sarvath on Sunday received Taiwanese President Lee Teng-hui and his wife Lee Sing-won who are on a two-day private visit to the country.

President Lee paid a visit to the Higher Council for Science and Technology, Hani Mulki, the council's secretary general, briefed the

Taiwanese president and the accompanying delegation on the council's activities and future programmes.

President Lee paid tribute to existing cooperation in the field of science between the two countries. He said that could be furthered in the future.

Mrs. Lee paid a visit to the sheltered workshops of the Young Women Muslim Association (YWMA) and was met by Princess Sarvath, the

association's honorary president. She also visited the Red Crescent Society and was briefed on its activities.

The Taiwanese president and his wife were received at the airport by Yanal Hikmat, His Majesty King Hussein's advisor, and Michael Hamarneh, Prince Hassan's office director.

The president and Mrs. Lee are expected to visit industrial institutions and tour archaeological sites.

Israel, Jordan discuss projects

AMMAN (Agencies) — Jordanian and Israeli officials met on Sunday to chart joint strategy for multi-billion-dollar plans to develop the rift valley separating the two countries, delegates said.

They were meeting ahead of a meeting with U.S. officials in Amman on Monday. Washington, a key promoter of the plan, has promised to help raise funds to provide benefits from Jordan's Oct. 26 peace treaty with Israel.

Delegates told Reuters the meeting of the Jordan Rift Valley's steering committee at Jordan's Red Sea port of Aqaba would also prepare for a regional economic conference in Jordan, expected to be held in late October.

It follows a similar meeting in Casablanca in November that drew world leaders and businessmen to discuss investment in the Middle East following moves towards peace.

Jordan and Israel are seeking massive funds to develop the rift valley. The plan includes a \$3 billion canal to bring Red Sea water to the Dead Sea.

Jordan and Israel discussed procedures related to visitors from both countries to Aqaba and Eilat and agreed to divert waste-water away from the sea, a senior official said.

Fayez Khasawneh, head of the Aqaba Regional Authority told the Associated Press the committee agreed to set up procedures for visitors to cross between Aqaba and Eilat as well as facilities for one-day tourists from both sides.

He said the panel also studied the problem of pollution of the Red Sea and agreed that both sides will dump waste water and sewage 35 kilometres away from the port.

The committee will meet next in Eilat April 22.

(Continued on page 7)

Turks hunt PKK rebels in Iraq and diplomatic understanding in West

SARSAN, Iraq (Agencies) — Turkish forces hunting rebel Kurds in Iraq turned their big guns on new targets on Sunday while Turkey's foreign minister headed for Europe and the United States to battle criticism of the two-week-old drive.

Erdal Inonu, appointed to the diplomatic job last week, left Ankara for Bonn on a trip that will also take him to Washington and Paris. Government officials said Deputy Prime Minister Hikmet Cetin would head for London this week as part of the same diplomatic offensive.

Speaking as he left Ankara Sunday, Mr. Inonu said: "My goal is to prevent any misunderstanding over the legitimate operation Turkey has undertaken to defend itself, and to assure that our relations with the allied countries continue on a solid foundation."

The Ankara government faces growing international criticism of its two-week old military drive to crush the separatist Kurdish Labour Party (PKK), which Turkey says uses northern Iraq for attacks on Turkey.

The PKK has been fighting since 1984 to set up an independent Kurdish homeland in southeast Turkey.

European countries, notably France and Germany, have voiced fears of a long-term occupation by Turkey of northern Iraq and possible human rights violations.

Britain and the United States have backed the Turkish move, with Washington stating that it sees the PKK as a "terrorist" operation.

Turkey says it will withdraw from northern Iraq once the guerrillas are crushed, but has refused to set a timetable for this. Turkish officials have said the operation, involving 35,000 troops backed by air power and artillery, is the country's largest military engagement outside its borders and could last a year.

The firmest criticism has come from Germany, which last week suspended weapons deliveries to Turkey and put on hold a \$107-million financial aid package for the construction in Germany of two frigates for the Turkish navy.

"(I will) clarify some of the misunderstandings which came up in the press during the operation in northern

Iraq, explain the extent, purpose and meaning of this defensive action," he told an Ankara airport news conference.

Mr. Inonu has a dual mission: To ease fears that Turkey will occupy northern Iraq for a long time and reassure its allies it is safeguarding civilians in the area, where 35,000 troops swept into Iraq on March 20 to hunt for rebels.

Some 15,000 Iraqi Kurdish villagers fled from a large valley northeast of the border town of Zakho after Turkish troops poured into northern Iraq nearly two weeks ago.

"You cannot see them camping, so the figure may seem high. But they went to other villages or to Zakho or Dahuk," said one aid worker.

About 200 Turkish troops raided the village of Seferia in the 60-kilometre-long Barwari Bala valley Sunday, refugees from the village told AFP.

They said the soldiers looted houses, took food and other belongings and arrested six men.

They shot and wounded one man who tried to leave Seferia by car and failed to stop when ordered to do so, the villagers said.

"They told us to leave the village because they were going to bomb it," said Gulezard Yassim.

Turkish commandos at Sarsan palace, once a summer resort of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, said about 500 soldiers moved into the snow-capped Qara mountain range early on Sunday.

They scouted the range, 35 kilometres south of the Turkish border, and alerted artillery forces where to direct their fire.

"Commandos went in early this morning and we are bombing with artillery from the palace," said a commando standing at the palace gate as the sound of artillery fire echoed behind him.

News from the front remained unclear, with the two sides claiming success and giving wildly conflicting death tolls.

Anatolia news agency said on Sunday the army had killed more than 295 PKK fighters.

(Continued on page 7)

كردان من اهل

Saudis will receive any pilgrim with visa

DUBAI (Agencies) — Saudi Arabia, reacting to an announcement by Libya that it would defly an international air embargo and send planes to the kingdom carrying pilgrims, said it would receive all pilgrims who have proper documents.

"We can talk for ourselves in Saudi Arabia, any person coming for Haj who has completed all conditions in terms of visas and Haj measures, we will receive him no matter what means he uses to arrive in," Interior Minister Prince Nayef Ben Abdul Aziz told reporters on Saturday night.

The official Saudi Press Agency said Prince Nayef was responding to a question on remarks by Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi on Tuesday that Libya would defly an international air embargo by sending planes to Saudi Arabia carrying pilgrims.

The prince's comments are in line with previous Saudi statements that the kingdom's doors are open to any pilgrim who has obtained the necessary Haj visa.

But he did not specifically say that Saudi Arabia would allow Libyan planes to land in the kingdom. Any pilgrims flying from Libya would have first to overfly Egypt, which in the past barred Libyan aircraft under a U.N.-imposed embargo.

In past years pilgrims have flown to Saudi Arabia after travelling overland to Egypt. This year's Haj starts in early May and pilgrims may start arriving in Saudi Arabia in April.

The U.N. Security Council on Thursday renewed sanctions clamped on Libya since 1992 for failing to surrender two alleged Libyans accused by the United States and Britain of involvement in the 1988 bombing of a Pan Am plane over Lockerbie, Scotland. All 259 people on board the Pan Am plane died in the explosion.

Libya on Saturday officially informed Saudi Arabia of its intention to defy the U.N. air embargo and asked for Saudi help for its planes, the official agency JANA re-

ported.

Libyan Unity Minister Jomaa Al Fezzani notified the Saudi charge d'affaires in Tripoli of "the Libyan people's decision to make the pilgrimage (to Mecca) this year on board Libyan planes," the agency said.

Mr. Fezzani gave the diplomat an "official memorandum" containing the scheduled flight times and "asked the Saudi authorities to facilitate the landing and take-off of the Libyan planes."

The planes would fly to the western Saudi town of Jeddah which is near Mecca, the minister said.

JANA reported earlier Saturday that a thousand Arabs living in Libya had volunteered to make the pilgrimage in response to Colonel Qaddafi's call.

The volunteers want to show "the Arab Nation's rejection of the unfair blockade," it said.

Last year, Libya organised a desert caravan, at least partly by camel, for pilgrims en route to Saudi Arabia via Egypt. A year earlier, the government allowed nearly 200 Libyans to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem's Al Aqsa mosque despite the country's enmity towards Israel.

Egypt's Middle East News Agency, in a dispatch from the Libyan capital Tripoli, said the Libyan government had notified the Saudi embassy of plans for 45 round-trip flights to Jeddah this year.

The sanctions ban all flights to or from Libya but allow for exemption to meet "urgent humanitarian needs."

U.N. officials have said this could cover flights for the Haj, a pilgrimage to Saudi shrines that Muslims are expected to make at least once in a lifetime.

But they stressed that Libya must request the exemption in writing in advance from the U.N. Sanctions Committee.

As of last week, U.N. officials said they had received any such request.

Palestinian Authority issues first 2 passports

GAZA CITY (R) — Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat signed the first two Palestinian passports on Saturday for himself and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. Mr. Arafat's spokesman said.

The new passports, which will be green-covered and carry the Palestinian eagle emblem, emerged months of negotiations with the Israelis, said Mr. Arafat's spokesman Nabil Abu Rdeineh.

Originally, Israel had objected to Palestinian passports, claiming that the Palestinian self-rule enclaves of the Gaza Strip and Jericho were not full countries.

Under the emblem, the passport says "Palestinian Authority" and in English says "Passport" and "Travel document."

The new passports followed the first Palestinian stamps in December, another symbol of statehood Israel had preferred not to allow the Palestinians.

Mr. Arafat's passport, like Mr. Mubarak's and those of other diplomats, has a red cover.

Mr. Arafat's passport was numbered 001, Mr. Abu Rdeineh said. Mr. Mubarak's passport was numbered 002.

Palestinian peace negotiations in his country since the 1993 signing of the self-rule accord, received passport number 002.

The Palestinian Interior Ministry began issuing green public passports to inhabitants of the self-rule areas this week, the officials added.

The first Palestinians to benefit were to be the 5,000 people planning to make the pilgrimage to Mecca at the start of May, as well as the 300 officials accompanying them.

The three-year passports are printed in Germany.

They state that the passport was issued by the "Palestinian autonomous government, in line with the Oslo accord signed on Sept. 13, 1993, in Washington."

Saudi Arabia has recently demanded that Israeli Arabs wishing to travel to Mecca should do so with a Palestinian passport, apparently so that they could be included in the Palestinian quota, the Jerusalem Post English daily said Friday.

Israeli Interior Minister Uzi Baram told the Post his country would not agree that Israeli Arabs, who are citizens of the Jewish state, be issued Palestinian passports.

Khartoum meeting assails Israel

KHARTOUM (Agencies) — More than 300 delegates from 80 countries on Sunday rejected any moves to normalise ties with Israel and urged Muslims to break the U.N. "stranglehold" on Iraq at an Islamic conference here.

In a statement published at the end of the three-day Islamic and Arab People's Conference, the delegates confirmed "their refusal of projects of normalisation with the Zionist entity."

They declared they were "opposed to any form of recognition and transaction with" Israel, either "economic or cultural."

And they strongly supported Syria's stand for "rejecting compromise projects" with Israel.

"The Palestinian issue is the central issue and the basis of confrontation with the Zionist enemy," the statement added.

It also gave its backing to Iraq's sovereignty and called "on Muslim countries to break the stranglehold of the sanctions which have been imposed on it" by the United Nations.

The U.N. oil and trade embargo imposed on Baghdad after it invaded Kuwait in August 1990 has crippled the Iraqi economy. It was renewed in March at the Security Council's regular two-monthly review despite calls from permanent members Russia, France and China for the sanctions to be eased.

The delegates here praised the three countries' efforts and called for an end to the embargo.

The statement, proposed as the final declaration, urged the Algerian government to "stop the bloodshed and begin a global dialogue" to end the conflict which erupted in January 1992 with the cancellation of elections Islamic fundamentalists were poised to win.

Delegates also appealed to Arab and Muslim countries to condemn "Russian aggression in Chechnya and back the mujahedeen fighters" while calling for a committee to be set up between the two sides to negotiate an end to the war.

There was "support for the people of Bosnia-Herzegovina against the Serb racism" and a call for the arms embargo on the former Yugoslav republic to be lifted.

The conference also voiced solidarity for the people in the Indian province of Kashmir and their "right to self-determination," urging India to "end its oppression and open talks."

Warring parties in Afghanistan and Somalia were called on "to put aside their personal and tribal conflicts to begin reconstruction."

Delegates to the conference also called for an "Islamic United Nations" to be set up and a shake-up of the current membership of the U.N. Security Council.

The meeting ended in a marathon and chaotic final session during which angry delegates urged conference Secretary-General Hassan Al Tourabi, reading a draft text of the final resolution, to toughen its condemnation of Israel.

But after three days of sometimes vitriolic condemnations of Western attacks on Islam, the draft resolution stressed efforts to open a Muslim dialogue with the West.

Mr. Tourabi, a prominent Sudanese Islamist widely believed to be the power behind Khartoum's military government, said many of the re-

quests made by delegates would be included in the meeting's final declaration, to be published later.

Western diplomats attending the final session of the conference said the tone appeared less confrontational than the last meeting in December 1993.

The draft resolution, as in previous meetings, described the Israeli-Palestinian issue as the "pivotal" concern of the conference, but it drew the ire of the Hizbollah (Party of God) delegation for not specifically opposing the 1993 Oslo accord for Palestinian self-rule in Gaza and the West Bank.

Proposals by sub-Saharan African representatives to drop the word "Arab" from the title of the conference, which upset Palestinian and Syrian delegates also caused confusion.

African delegates said Arabs had "hijacked" Islam, and won a majority in a vote on the issue on Saturday. But Mr. Tourabi, apparently anxious not to lose support from pan-Arabist elements of the conference, said delegates needed to reach full consensus on the issue before it was adopted.

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Palestinian men wedded to Israeli life

HERBRON, occupied West Bank (AFP) — Palestinian men on the occupied West Bank have discovered a new way round the closure which has kept them out of Israel since 1993 — marriages of convenience.

While some of those who marry Israeli Arabs are single, others first have to divorce their Palestinian wives, at least on paper, as Israeli law forbids polygamy.

"I agreed to my husband marrying an Israeli Arab woman because the military administration refused to give him a permit to work in Israel," said Oum Mohammad, a 48-year-old Palestinian woman living in Hebron.

"My husband was unemployed for eight months. Now he goes to visit his new wife in Israel five days a week, which allows him to work and feed our eight children."

Hussam Massarweh, clerk of the Islamic court in the Arab village of Taybeh in Israel, confirmed the trend.

"In the past two years there have been more and more marriages between Palestinians and Israeli Arabs," he said.

"Last year I registered nearly 200 marriages at my court. This year we are getting more than 20 a month. Sometimes they are real marriages, but there are also marriages of convenience."

"A Palestinian I know from Tulkarem last week asked me on the telephone to find him a divorcee or widow. He wants to pay her to marry him," said Mr. Massarweh.

Since 1993 Israel has only allowed in Palestinians from the West Bank who have special permits. Their number varies periodically, it currently stands at 24,500. Before the closure more than 100,000 Palestinians were employed in Israel.

"Men in Hebron get divorced as a sheer formality to marry an Israeli Arab woman, find work in Israel and subsequently obtain an Israeli identity card," said Sheikh Tayssir Rajab Tamimi, a Muslim court official.

"I have seen divorced

men leave my place chatting happily and laughing. Now I refuse to make such arrangements," he said.

He had dealt with more than 20 divorce cases in the past month, compared with about four in March 1994.

Abdel Azim Al Sheikh, a teacher in Hebron aged 28, is a bachelor who also wants to marry an Israeli Arab woman.

"It not only opens up work opportunities and eases movement but it also gives us the right to medical insurance and pension schemes," he said.

According to Pini Badash, a deputy representing the rightwing Tzomet Party, such marriages "harm state security by turning Israeli Arabs against Israel."

He said a Palestinian who married an Israeli Arab woman "could easily have had fundamentalist militants in his family who were killed by Israelis — that can only influence his new family."

The marriages could also alter the demographic balance in Israel, he warned.

Israel is home to some 800,000 Israeli Arabs, out of a total population of more than five million.

Israel has refused to lift the closure amid a spate of anti-Israeli attacks by militants opposed to the peace process.

The army was due to redeploy away from Palestinian towns on the West Bank ahead of elections to a new self-rule council, originally set for July 1994, but the move was delayed due to attacks on Israelis.

Israelis want world effort against Iran

TEL AVIV (AP) — Israeli officials on Sunday called on the United States to lead a global campaign to economically strangle and topple Iran's Islamic fundamentalist regime before it acquired nuclear weapons.

The call came from two important officials in Israel's government, the coordinator of activities in Lebanon and a cabinet minister, at a seminar on Iran at Tel Aviv University. It reflected growing Israeli concern about Iran's nuclear programme.

Uri Lubrani, Israel's Lebanon coordinator and a former ambassador to Tehran, said a nuclear-armed Iran would try to seize control of the Gulf to control the Middle East's oil exports.

Health Minister Ephraim Sneh said the chances of toppling Iran's government were better than those of preventing it from obtaining nuclear weapons.

No one knew how long it would take for Iran to acquire nuclear weapons, he said, citing assessments it could be as close as three years away and adding the further shortcuts were possible.

"When it has nuclear weapons the entire world will be exposed to blackmail," Mr. Sneh said.

But both speakers agreed the fundamentalists, who overthrew the Shah of Iran in 1978, are vulnerable because of a constantly deteriorating economic situation.

Palestinian row at Khartoum meeting

KHARTOUM (Agencies) — Splits in Palestinian loyalties burst into the open on Saturday as angry Palestinians turned a conference aimed at bolstering Arab and Islamic solidarity into a shouting match, delegates said.

They said Palestinians from groups which formally split from Yasser Arafat's Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) were incensed that conference hosts had given a platform to Hani Al Hassan, a PLO member.

They said Abu Khalid Al Omla, who broke away from the PLO in 1983, and a member of his delegation shouted Mr. Hassan down as he tried to make his speech to the conference.

Mr. Hassan later stormed out of the meeting, followed by an anxious-looking Hassan Al Tourabi, the influential Sudanese Islamist who is also secretary-general of the conference.

"He called me a dog... I am not a terrorist, I am not (Palestinian guerrilla) Abu Nidal," Mr. Hassan shouted

at Dr. Tourabi in front of journalists.

Mr. Hassan has criticised the PLO's self-rule accord with Israel, the target of much condemnation at the Khartoum conference, but has not broken links with Mr. Arafat.

Mr. Hassan, a member of Fateh's central committee, was shouted down as he criticised the Israeli-Palestinian autonomy accords and said Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin "has proved he does not want peace or return Jerusalem."

Mr. Omla, shouted out: "You criticise the accords while you were one of the negotiators."

Mr. Hassan retorted: "Liar, I never took part in negotiations. As for you, you have thrown yourselves into the arms of the Syrians."

A colleague of Mr. Omla then called Mr. Hassan a "dog."

Mr. Omla, and two colleagues stormed out of the conference hall before being persuaded to return by fellow

delegates. Mr. Omla's colleague apologised for insulting Mr. Hassan.

The clash took place in front of 300 delegates from 80 countries taking part in the three-day conference which opened Thursday at Sudan's Chinese-built Friendship Hall on the Nile.

Palestinian delegates to the conference are opposed to the Israeli-PLO autonomy accords which launched Palestinian self-rule in the Gaza Strip and Jericho last May.

Some of the delegates to the conference, aimed at rallying Arab and Muslim delegates against perceived Western domination, just after a representative of rival Somali warlord Farah Aided.

General Aided's spokesman condemned United Nations peacekeepers who stayed more than two years in the country before pulling out last month.

Neither speaker mentioned reconciliation between opposing Somali factions.

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Fundamentalist mayors flex muscles in Turkey

ISTANBUL (AP) — From city hall to the slaughterhouse, Turkey's main Muslim fundamentalist party is putting an Islamic stamp on this city of 12 million people.

No alcohol is served at historic city-owned coffeehouses. Firefighters may have full beards. Women clerks at city hall wear headscarves. Municipal cafeterias close during Ramadan. The city slaughterhouse butchers animals in accordance with Islamic law.

Things are similar in Ankara. The capital's new mayor, Melih Gokcek, removed nude statues from parks. "I spit on art of this sort," he said.

A year after winning big in local elections, Turkey's fast-rising Refah (welfare) Party is flexing its muscles.

Already with 38 seats in the 450-member parliament, Welfare doubled its vote to 19 per cent and captured 26 mayoralities in elections a year ago march.

Now the party is hoping to build support for national elections, which will take place sometime in 1996.

Under Turkey's election laws, it could become the largest single party in parliament, with just another five per cent of the seats.

"If the government really wants democracy, it has to get used to the idea of the Welfare party," said a government official, Mehmet Metiner. "Otherwise there will be friction — or a tendency to turn into another Algeria."

Fundamentalists here do not have the public support or violent bent of their brethren in Algeria, where a vicious war between extremists and the army has claimed more than 30,000 lives in three years.

Turkey also has a tradition of democracy and secular government established by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk in 1923. He suppressed religious garb and schools and changed the alphabet from the Koran's language, Arabic, to Latin. Turkey followed his Western path into the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and association with the European Union.

Secularism remains power-

ful. Not even Mr. Metiner can remove Ataturk's portrait from his office. It is required by law in public buildings, and appears just about everywhere else.

But Prime Minister Tansu Ciller's centre-right coalition is burdened by economic woes and criticism from the West for Turkey's occupation of northern Iraq in the latest offensive of its 11-year war against Kurdish rebels.

Growing poverty and disenchantment with established parties tainted by corruption scandals are driving more and more voters into Welfare's arms.

Mosques are

Abequa to go on trial for murder

By Jamal Halaby
Associated Press

AMMAN — A Jordanian-American who confessed to strangling his wife in her New Jersey apartment goes on trial here Monday.

Mohammed Ismail Abequa, 46, will go before a three-judge, no-jury criminal court on charges of premeditated murder and transgression of the custody of juveniles, said State Prosecutor Ghazi Azar.

If convicted, Mr. Abequa faces the death penalty. However, the Kingdom has commuted most death sentences in recent years.

Justice Minister Hisham Tal said Mr. Abequa "will get a fair trial under the laws

of this country.... all his rights will be respected." He said the trial will be swift.

Mr. Abequa, a naturalised U.S. citizen, told the Associated Press in a prison cell interview last July that he killed his 40-year-old wife, Nihal, in her Parsippany, New Jersey home in a dispute over the custody of their two children Lisa, 6, and Sami, 3.

He said he fled the United States with the children after the July 4 killing and took refuge in his mother's house in Amman. He was arrested July 20 and has been in custody since then.

King Hussein intervened in the case in August and the children were handed over to their maternal aunt, Nesime

Dokur, of Morristown, New Jersey.

Jordan turned down American requests for Mr. Abequa's extradition for trial in the United States, citing the absence of an extradition treaty.

Such a treaty was signed Tuesday, but Jordanian officials said they want Mr. Abequa tried here.

New Jersey prosecutors have provided evidence against Mr. Abequa to their Jordanian counterparts, who travelled to the state and met with witnesses.

It was not immediately clear if the prosecution intends to summon witnesses from the United States, or if U.S. law enforcement officials will attend the trial.

Sweden pledges active role in Mideast peace process

STOCKHOLM (Petra) — Swedish Prime Minister Ingmar Carlsson stressed his country's political and economic support and commitment to peace in the Middle East.

In a statement issued by the Swedish embassy in Amman, Mr. Carlsson said the Swedish government has increased its assistance and assigned a specialised coordinating team for Middle East affairs whose task was to upgrade the level of Swedish contributions towards peace at the economic and political levels.

The prime minister said that the peace process is in its difficult stages at present but there is a real desire for all concerned parties to achieve peace.

He said that the Palestinian people should be given their rights, and Israel's right to security should be recognised to achieve a just, durable and permanent peace in the Middle East.

Mr. Carlsson said religious and ethnic barriers should be overcome among all sects.

Some may think that religious extremism is the main stream in Islam, he said, but this is due to ignorance in knowing the real Islam.

He said European leaders were the ones who should shoulder a large share of responsibility in confronting this danger. Sweden, he said, will hold special conferences on this subject aimed at understanding the real Islam in Europe.

Agence France Presse added Sunday from Cairo that Swedish Foreign Minister Lena Hjelm-Wallen said that her country will take an active role in promoting the peace process between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

Swedish "wants to play a role" especially because "Norway has made the same request to us," she said.

Oslo hosted secret talks between the PLO and the Jewish state which led to the Declaration of Principles on autonomy signed in Washington in September 1993.

Ms. Hjelm-Wallen said she had formed an action committee for the Middle East and had appointed her predecessor Sten Andersson to represent Stockholm in contacts to be made with the two sides, to "facilitate the re-establishment of peace."

She underlined the need to "improve the economic and social situation of the Palestinians" to avoid complications in the peace process.



Minister of Culture Samir Habashneh (left) opens a National Book Week at the Royal Cultural Centre. Seated to the left is Jordan Library Association President Yousef Qandil and to the right, former president Anwar Akroush (Petra photo)

Minister opens National Book Week stressing need to develop national library

AMMAN (Petra) — Deputising Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, Minister of Culture Samir Habashneh Sunday opened National Book Week, organised by the Jordan Library Association (JLA).

In his address to the ceremony, Mr. Habashneh called on the JLA to come up with specific and feasible recommendations at the end of the week.

He said that there is a serious study to develop the

national library and to open new branches in the various governorates.

Mr. Habashneh invited the JLA for a meeting with ministry officials to discuss library-related issues.

JLA President Yousef Qandil outlined the association's role in supporting libraries, and noted the absence of outside support, the shortage of library services and training.

Anwar Akroush, one of Jordan's pioneering libra-

rians, and former president of the JLA, stressed the important role played by veteran librarians in establishing, and developing library work. He called for utilising new library and information technology.

At the end of the opening ceremony, Mr. Habashneh handed certificates of appreciation to veteran librarians and opened a book exhibition, including more than 2,000 books covering various topics.

WHAT'S GOING ON

Film entitled "Tous Les Matins Du Monde" at the French Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.

COND ADAM DRAMA FESTIVAL

Two plays entitled "The Theatre of Sivastopole" and "The Eyes of Maria and Sindbad" respectively at 7:00 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. at the Royal Cultural Centre.

SEMINAR

Seminar on English language by Dr. Noha Homad at the British Council at 5:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

Exhibition of copper sculptures by Iraqi artist Muhammad Hussein Jodi at the Phoenix Gallery for Culture and Art.

Visiting UNDP official tours geographic centre

AMMAN (Petra) — Director General of the Royal Geographic Centre (RGC) Salim Khalifah Sunday met with Vice-President of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Rafi'eddin Ahmad and UNDP resident representative in Amman Othman Hashem and reviewed with them cooperation between RGC and UNDP.

Mr. Khalifah briefed the two UNDP officials on pro-

grammes carried out by the centre and a programme which was carried out by RGC in cooperation with the U.N. agency.

He said the equipment which was provided for the centre through the programme constituted the nucleus for its geographic information system unit.

This unit, he said, was developed by RGC and was used to train Jordanian and Arab personnel.

'UNIDO to help Jordan's industrial sector'

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) will help Jordan develop its industrial sector by conducting in-depth studies and training programmes and also convene an international seminar on investment opportunities in the Kingdom, officials said Sunday.

UNIDO Director-General Mauricio de Maria Y Campos also promised to help Jordan's efforts to protect its environment by conducting studies and identifying potential sources of environmental pollution as well as by organising programmes for personnel to deal with the problem, the officials said.

Mr. Maria Y Campos is on a visit to Jordan accompanied by Wafa Kamel, director of UNIDO programmes in Arab countries.

One of the key themes of the visit is to explore possibilities of UNIDO cooperation with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and private sector institutions, the officials said.

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan met with Mr. Maria Y Campos on Saturday. Other officials who held talks with the UNIDO official included Minister of Environment Nader Thuheirat, Ministry of Plan-

ning Secretary-General Nabil Amman, Ministry of Industry and Trade Secretary-General Mohammad Smadi, Royal Scientific Society President Hani Mulki and Amman Chamber of Industry Chairman Khalidoun Abu Hassan.

The Jordan News Agency, Petra, said Dr. Smadi called on Mr. Maria Y Campos for help in developing small and medium-size industries in Jordan and in setting up a data bank for industrial statistics in the Kingdom.

Dr. Smadi also urged the opening of a UNIDO office in Amman, noting that the presence of such an office would advance Jordan's efforts to attract foreign investments.

Petra said Mr. Maria Y Campos promised to consider the proposals and calls.

It also quoted the UNIDO official as saying he considered favourable a call to convene a meeting in Amman to highlight the investment climate in Jordan and the opportunities available in the Kingdom for foreign capital.

Ali Dajani, an advisor at the Chamber of Industry, who attended Mr. Maria Y Campos' meeting with the chamber president, Mr. Abu Hassan, noted that the meeting could bring in representatives of multinational companies operating in Jordan and those which

have licensing agreements with Jordanian companies.

"The opinion of those multinationals count very much in the international scene," said Mr. Dajani.

In his talks with Mr. Maria Y Campos, Mr. Abu Hassan noted that UNIDO had conducted a study on the quality of bread in Jordan and another on production of containers for pharmaceuticals in view of the considerable increase in output of the pharmaceuticals in Jordan.

Both studies are with the concerned sectors, and the Amman Chamber of Industry is awaiting their response, Mr. Dajani said.

The chamber also requested the Vienna-based organisations to help conduct workshops on means to improve small and medium-size industries and how to raise industrial productivity.

Mr. Maria Y Campos promised to study the requests, said Mr. Dajani.

Environmental protection was the central theme for the UNIDO official's meeting with Minister of Environment Thuheirat on Sunday, Petra reported.

It quoted Mr. Maria Y Campos as saying that UNIDO was ready to conduct a study on the industrial sector in Jordan to pinpoint the sectors that have an impact on the environment as the first step towards providing funds for projects stemming from the study.

Visiting UNIDO chief tours NHF

AMMAN (J.T.) — Director General of the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) Mauricio de Maria Y Campos Sunday visited Noor Al Hussein Foundation (NHF) and was received by In'am Mufti, advisor to Her Majesty Queen Noor for Planning, Development and NHF International Relations, Abdullah Hindawi, NHF director general and NHF senior staff, an NHF statement said.

Mrs. Mufti and Mr. Campos discussed possible means of cooperation, said the statement.

Mrs. Mufti briefed him on the NHF development philosophy which focuses on long-term integrated development projects which help families and communities reach self-reliance through democratic grassroots participation.

She also stressed that the NHF is currently concentrating on collective income-generating projects which ensure fixed income for beneficiaries throughout Jordan.

Mr. Campos mentioned that UNIDO intends to provide the NHF with technical assistance for small and medium scale projects and for improving the quality and specifications of products.

UNIDO last month delegated an expert to work for three weeks at the NHF's Women-in-Development Project in order to improve

packaging methods and to find marketing outlets for its products.

After watching a film on the NHF, Mr. Campos toured NHF's Jordan Design and Trade Centre (Liwan) which includes special selections of woolen rugs, embroidered home furnishings, ceramics, glassware, basketry, fashionable clothing, wrought iron furniture, personal accessories and Islamic calligraphy items — all designed and produced by more than 3,000 Jordanian crafts men and women.

Mr. Campos was accompanied by Wafa Kamel, director of the Arabic Programme at UNIDO.

Dailies await government decision on customs duties on newsprint

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Daily newspapers have increased advertising charges by 33 per cent and are now awaiting a government decision on customs duties on newsprint before they hike the prices of dailies, publishers said Sunday.

There will not be any increase in the prices of dailies from the present 150 fils if the government agreed to exempt newsprint from import licence fees as well as customs duties.

"We are waiting for the Prime Minister to return home and take a decision," said Mohammad Amad, director-general of the Jordan Press Foundation Company, which publishes the mass-circulation Al Rai

Arabic-language daily and the Jordan Times.

"We cannot survive unless the government gives us full exemption from customs duties and import licence fees on newsprint," said Mr. Amad.

Newspaper establishments, which have been doing good business in the past years, stand to lose heavily if no exemption from customs duties and import licence fee was granted, given that the cost of newsprint has increased by more than 120 per cent since May 1994.

A tonne of newsprint cost about \$450 in May 1994. Today, quotes received from suppliers are between \$1,070 and \$1,150, and all indications are that the prices would remain high for at least

another two years.

Industry sources note that there is an acute shortage of newsprint all over the world and attribute it to the dramatic rise in the number of newspapers since 1990.

The issue of publishers' losses as a result of the increase in newsprint was raised early this year in Jordan, with publishers saying that they wanted to increase advertising charges and hike the cost of newspapers from 150 fils to 200 fils.

The government intervened and offered a 50 per cent exemption for newsprint from customs duties, but said a seven per cent sales tax was applicable. The decision on sales was later withdrawn.

Mr. Amad and other publishers noted that the 50 per

cent exemption from customs duties was not enough to make for the additional costs incurred for the newsprint.

Therefore, they are insisting on full exemption from the customs duties as well as import licence fees.

"I now have a tender for 3,000 tonnes of newsprint, but I am unable to take a decision without getting a clear answer from the government," said Mr. Amad.

Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker is expected to return home this week after accompanying His Majesty King Hussein to official talks in Paris and Washington; publishers expect a decision to come after Sharif Zeid's return.

Finance Minister Basel Jarrah also was in Washing-

ton to attend the King's talks.

Newspaper publishers said the increase in advertising charges took effect from April 1. But the hike was not applicable to government advertisements since the 50 per cent exemption from customs duties was linked to a precondition that the publishers would not raise the cost of advertisements coming from the government.

The government also said the publishers should not raise the cost of newspapers.

Mr. Amad said advertisers appeared to have taken the increase in costs without any problems. "They seem to appreciate the validity of our case and there have been no protests from our clients over the increase in advertising," he said.

Opposition calls on government to free 'scores of prisoners'

AMMAN (R) — Opposition parties on Sunday called on the government to free what they said were scores of prisoners, including members of the influential Islamic Action Front Party arrested recently.

The coalition of 11 parties, which opposes Jordan's peace treaty with Israel signed on Oct. 26, said the government used last month's attack on a French diplomat as a pretext for the arrests.

It protested against what it termed continued curbs on public freedoms enacted before Jordan signed the treaty, including a ban on mosque sermons and anti-peace rallies.

"We urge all honourable forces ... and international human rights groups to support the cases of Jordanian detainees," they said in a statement faxed to Reuters.

"We condemn the government's continued stifling of liberties and we urge it to

release all political detainees."

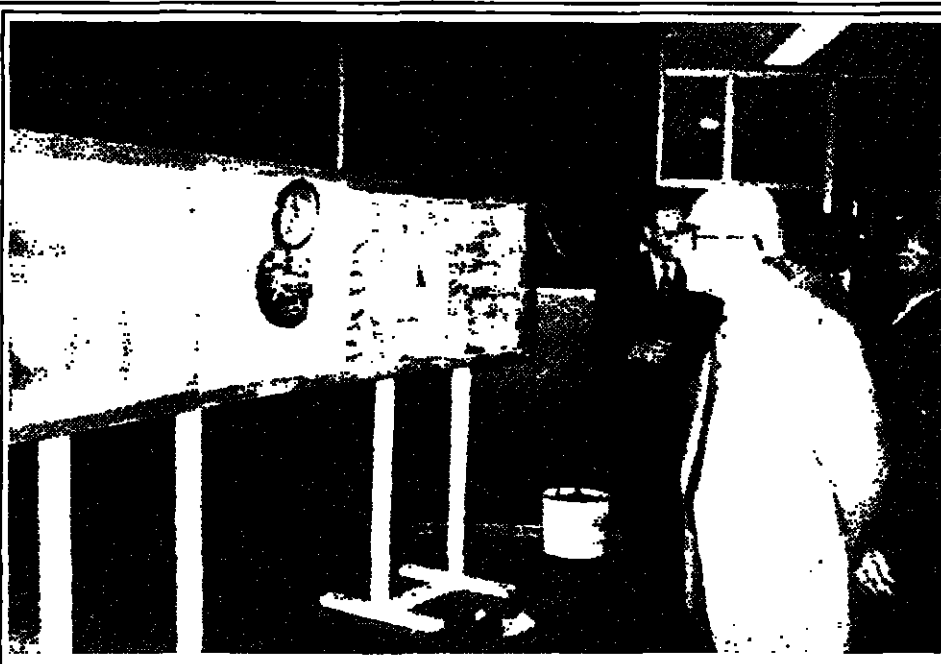
They did not say how many men were held.

The Interior Ministry, which denies holding political prisoners, was not immediately available for comment.

But official sources said police had arrested at least 17 people, mainly from the Muslim Brotherhood movement, after two members were accused of shooting a French diplomat that is attracting rising numbers of Israelis.

The two men, from leading Jordanian families, will be tried soon for attacking Gilles Heine, second secretary at the French embassy.

The Brotherhood, which has a history of relative peaceful coexistence with the government since the 1950s, vehemently denied any connection with the attack on the diplomat.



HAILING THE U.N.: Deputising for Acting Prime Minister and Education Minister Abdul Raouf Rawabdeh, Secretary General of the Ministry of Education Munther Masri Sunday opens at Al Nuzha Vocational School for Girls an art exhibition marking the 50th anniversary of the United Nations. The five-day exhibition, which displays art works by school students from all over the Kingdom, aims to shed light on the activities of the U.N. It includes 200 artworks depicting the humanitarian works of U.N. agencies (Petra photo)

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Balladur accuses Chirac of being intolerant, irresponsible

PARIS (R) — French Prime Minister Edouard Balladur, slowly closing the gap on presidential frontrunner Jacques Chirac, has virulently accused his fellow conservative of being absolutist, intolerant and irresponsible.

Mr. Balladur, the favourite until a surge of support for Mr. Chirac two months ago, turned up the heat on the Paris mayor as an opinion poll published Sunday showed the distance between the two narrowing ahead of the April 23-May 7 election.

Mr. Balladur, campaigning in Normandy, denounced what he called "the absolutism and the intolerance of the Chirac camp."

Turning on Mr. Chirac, a fellow member of the Gaullist Rally For the Republic, he told a Saturday rally of some 3,000 supporters in the city of Caen: "If the French elect someone to the presidency, it is with the wish that he be responsible."

"And if he doesn't want to be responsible, then it would be better if he did not seek the votes of the French," he added.

Mr. Balladur, whose government has been rocked by a Franco-American spy row and public sector strikes, has adopted a more aggressive stance in an effort to catch up in the campaign's final weeks.

He said the president should also be "a man who listens, a man of dialogue who is willing to question his actions" — in line with his replies to critics who accuse him of inaction and giving in to protesters including students and public sector strikers.

A survey published Sunday by the weekly Le Journal Du Dimanche showed that Mr. Chirac's lead has narrowed in recent weeks.

The IFOP poll predicted

Mr. Chirac would take 24.5 per cent of the vote in the first round, down on 28 per cent, a month ago.

Socialist candidate Lionel Jospin remained at 22 per cent, while Mr. Balladur edged up to 20.5 per cent from 19 per cent.

A third of those surveyed said they might still change their minds.

Mr. Chirac's lead over his rivals narrowed also in the run-off vote on May 7 between the two candidates who gain the most votes in the first round.

Sunday's poll predicted Mr. Chirac would beat Mr. Jospin by 57 per cent to 43 (against 59 per cent to 41 a month ago) and Mr. Balladur by 58 per cent to 42 (against 64 per cent to 36).

The IFOP survey was the latest in a series of polls which showed Mr. Chirac's lead over Mr. Balladur was narrowing.

Mr. Jospin, seeking to rally the left, told Le Journal Du Dimanche that he might appoint Communist ministers to his government if he won the election.

Asked if Communists would serve if he was elected, Mr. Jospin answered: "Why not? That will depend on the stand they take. It's a possibility but it's not up to me to ask one party or another, including the Communist Party, to consider this."

"But the presence of Communists in the government is not an obstacle to me. Besides, I don't see whom it would bother, given that the Soviet Union has disappeared as a Communist state system," Mr. Jospin said.

Latest opinion polls credit the Communist candidate, party leader Robert Hue, with about eight per cent in the first round, making him unlikely to qualify for the run-

off vote.

Mr. Jospin would need to attract leftist or centrist voters from outside his Socialist Party to stand a chance of becoming president if he makes it to the second round.

Mr. Balladur virulently accused his fellow-conservative foe's camp Sunday of blackmailing his supporters.

The premier told France-2 he was shocked at the attitude of some of Mr. Chirac's lieutenants and doubted that Mr. Chirac would act impartially on public service appointments if elected.

"I hear people say that certain parliamentarians will go to purgatory and perhaps they will be forgiven if they don't back the right candidate. Are there some candidates you can vote for and others you can't vote for?" Mr. Balladur asked.

Balladur also branded "intimidation" rumours fanned by Chirac backers that a run-off contest between himself and Mr. Chirac would deeply divide the RPR and damage the prospects of its deputies should the victor call a general election.

"I am standing as a free man. I threaten no one, I don't promise anybody anything and nor do I put any pressure on anyone," Mr. Balladur said, adding that he was now free to answer critics after quietly enduring attacks for two years because the country needed stability.

Meanwhile, Mr. Balladur said Sunday that France and Germany must link up to forge a stronger military intervention corps that would "give Europe a place on the world stage."

Mr. Balladur told France-2 television he would commit himself if elected to preserving the special relationship forged by outgoing President Francois Mitterrand and Chancellor Helmut Kohl.

"I will be a guarantor of that relationship because for the past two years I have done what I could to reinforce Franco-German relations. I suggested giving them a new impetus with closer links between parliaments," he said.

"On Europe, the French and the Germans must link up to give Europe a security tool, which would go further than the Franco-German (joint military) Corps and give Europe a place on the world stage in its own right," he added.

Pointing to differences among European partners on intervention in Bosnia or Rwanda, Mr. Balladur said if Paris and Bonn could reach an agreement other partners would follow suit.

Mr. Balladur, whose country holds the presidency of the European Union, said last month the EU must be given real military muscle to preserve peace and security in the post-cold war era.

While it was vital to maintain trans-Atlantic ties with the United States through NATO, failure to end the war in former Yugoslavia had shown the EU needed to do more on defence, he told a Paris-based conference on stability in Europe.

France and Germany both argue that at next year's EU reform conference the European Council of EU heads of state and government should be given the power to use Western European Union forces to implement a common foreign and security policy.

Mr. Chirac has also stressed the importance of the Franco-German relationship within the EU. He said last week he wanted to make France a bridge in the union between Germany and more sceptical Britain.



Romanian Orthodox priests offer prayers field north of Bucharest three minutes after the wreckage of a Brussels-bound Tarom Airbus which had exploded and crashed in a

Experts search Romania Airbus crash

BUCHAREST (R) — Forensic experts were picking through the wreckage of a Romanian Airbus Sunday in a bid to determine whether an explosion or mechanical failure caused it to crash with the loss of all 60 aboard.

The Romanian national airline Tarom has ruled out pilot error but said it was considering every other possibility for Friday's crash in heavy snow just after takeoff for Brussels from Otopeni Airport.

"For the time being, we can say nothing about the cause of the accident," Tarom General Manager Nicolae Brutaru said. "There are hundreds of questions one has to answer."

The airline hopes that at least some of the answers will be found when the "black box" flight recorder, found Saturday, have been decoded, and is insisting this is done in Bucharest.

Brutaru said the aircraft fell from 4,700 feet (1,400 metres), a height at which pilots should have been able to cope with a fire or a failure of one of the Airbus's two engines.

"It must have been something which the pilots could not control," he said.

One eyewitness has said he saw an explosion before the crash.

The same flight to Brussels was the subject of a bomb threat on March 15, although no device was found. However, Belgium's ambassador to Brussels said Saturday he was sure Friday's crash was an accident and not the result of some "malicious act."

Another of Tarom's three Airbus went into a steep dive over Paris last September, only to be pulled out at the last moment. French air accident investigators cleared the Airbus of blame.

At the crash site troops loaded the parts of the charred wreck onto trucks. Most of the wreckage is concentrated on a football-pitched sized area but one air investigator said parts were found about a kilometre away.

Tiberiu Blaj knelt on a path leading to the scorched field to pray for his sister Doina Borde.

"I've come to see the place where my sister died. She came to Romania from

France for our mother's funeral. Doina was dressed in mourning clothes when she died. It's a tragedy," he said.

Foreigners in Bucharest gathered at the English Church for a memorial service to the victims of the crash early Sunday. The congregation in the small red-brick church marked a minute's silence after the vicar read the names of those killed.

Forty-nine passengers died in the crash — 32 Belgians, nine Romanians, three Americans, two Spaniards and one person each from France, the Netherlands and Thailand.

The Airbus had flown from Bangkok Thursday night. Tarom said Saturday its two remaining A310s would be allowed to fly again having been grounded for checks after the crash.

Airbus Industrie has said Friday's crash was the third involving an A310 Airbus, a model which entered service in 1983. One crashed in Kathmandu, Nepal in 1992 in bad weather and a second in March 1994, while flying from Moscow to Hong Kong.

Mountaineer scales 42-storey block unaided

LA DEFENSE, France (AFP) — A French mountaineer scaled unaided the outer face of a 42-storey office block outside Paris Saturday, police said. Alain Robert, 32, took half an hour to complete what was his third attempt to climb up the glass building in the modern business district of La Defense west of the capital without safety equipment. Robert, who was taken in for questioning by police when he reached the roof, has previously climbed Paris's 58-storey Montparnasse Tower and skyscrapers in the United States.

Germany to sell Honecker's vacation home

BERLIN (R) — A 100-hectare (250-acre) property presented to former East German Communist leader Erich Honecker as a 70th birthday present by the head of his feared secret police went on sale. The German government is asking at least 4.5 million marks (\$3.3 million) for the property in the northeastern state of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern which has a pool, sauna and bodyguards' quarters and its own motorway exit. But the buyer must agree to use the 100-hectare estate, presented to Honecker in 1982 as a 70th birthday gift by former secret police chief Erich Mielke and long off-limits to the east German public, for non-profit purposes that serve the community.

Britain takes food-on-the-box award

DEAUVILLE, France (AFP) — Britain won top prize in the first International Festival of Television and Gastronomy held in this Channel port over the past week. Granada Television's This Morning, hosted by Susan Brooks, was crowned the world's best food show on the small screen among a line-up of programmes produced by 42 television stations from 32 countries. The festival featured "best of selections from food programmes by each of the competing stations. The Chefs' Prize, awarded by a panel of top chefs from Deauville, the Normandy region and Paris, went to Television Suisse Romande, from French-speaking Switzerland, and their presenter Jean-Luc Koenig. A panel of French and foreign culinary journalists voted for presenter Daniel Pinard from Radio Quebec, in Canada, while the 42 presenters who were attending the festival chose their Australian peer Ian Parmenter of the ABC television channel. The homeland of gastronomy, represented by Maite and Micheline of the French station FR3 and their programme "La Cuisine Des Mousquetaires" (Cooking For Musketeers), had to make do with the Europe Prize, awarded to the best European programme by a panel of non-European presenters.

That's disgusting British experts find out why

LONDON (R) — People are highly consistent in what they find disgusting, although men and women occasionally differ in response, British psychologists reported. Graham Davey, of the University of Sussex, and Karen Barker, from London's City University, set out to identify whether there were groups of things that people found disgusting, and whether there were sex differences. They found many of the clichés were true — the woman who blithely ignores baby vomit on her skirt while her husband gags will herself flinch at the sight of a squirming earth-worm. They told a conference of the British psychological society that they interviewed 30 people, half of them university students, to find out what they found disgusting. They found five basic areas: off and other animal products such as greasy hair, insect such as maggots, gastro enteric products such as vomit and sexual activities such as incest. "Females exhibited significantly higher scores on all categories except gastro-enteric products," they said. Their findings, they said, fit in with earlier studies that showed people tended to be disgusted by things that could be dangerous, such as animals known to spread disease like rats, infectious waste products or incest and paedophilia.

Azerbaijan cracks down on dissent

BAKU (R) — Azerbaijan President Heydar Aliyev has launched a crackdown on dissent and many political opponents have been arrested since an attempted coup was crushed last month, diplomats and opposition figures say.

They said dozens of political activists have been arrested since government soldiers smashed a rebellion by the OPON elite police force on March 17 in Baku, capital of the former Soviet republic bordering Iran and southern Russia.

"There have been 400 political arrests in the last couple of weeks. Some of these people have been released but others are still in prison," said one Western diplomat, speaking on condition of anonymity.

The number of arrests could not be verified officially. Vafa Gulizade, an adviser to Mr. Aliyev, did not deny some arrests had been made but played down their significance.

"Imagine that a coup happens in the United States. A lot of people would be arrested. Maybe some of them are criminals, maybe some of them are innocent. I

think the situation will be clear very soon," Gulizade said.

The OPON (Special Designation Police Unit) rebelled last month, defying an order to be disbanded for allegedly plotting to overthrow Mr. Aliyev.

Mr. Aliyev, 71, sent in troops and put down the mutiny in an eight-hour gun-battle at the OPON's base just outside Baku.

The leader of the rebellion, Rovshan Javadov, was killed in the fighting. The Health Ministry said at the time that at least 35 other people had died, although many witnesses fear the toll was higher.

Azeri officials have linked the People's Front, the main Azeri opposition group, and several other organisations with the rebellion and said culprits would be sought out.

Mr. Aliyev said those who took part in the rebellion would be punished, but vowed there would be no widespread repression.

Asim Mollazade, a deputy chairman of the Popular Front opposition movement, said 83 of the group's members had been imprisoned in the last two weeks.

"Many of them haven't been formally accused of any crime at all," he said, adding that others had been charged with treason.

Opposition newspapers have also been facing censorship and Mr. Mollazade feared a wide-scale crackdown on all opposition was under way, using the coup attempt as a pretext for arrests.

Mr. Aliyev kept Azerbaijan under a tight grip in Soviet times and rose to the Soviet Union's ruling politburo, from which he was eventually removed in 1987 after falling out of step with the policies of Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev.

Mr. Aliyev rebuilt his political base in the republic and returned to power in 1992 after an army mutiny ousted elected President Alibuz Elchibey.

Since then, critics say he has concentrated power in his own hands and that the official media frequently showers praise on him.

Government officials have hinted that long-promised parliamentary elections might be held later this year, but some observers expressed fears that they would not be fair.

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Ironically, the Khmer Rouge are currently making good use of the network of bunkers and tunnels dug by the former Vietnamese occupiers of Malai before their withdrawal from Cambodia in 1989.

Analysts said the current operation is more likely aimed at providing increased security along National Route 5 to Poipet, a thriving centre of commerce for border-based Thai and Cambodian traders.

The Khmer Rouge Sunday blasted the visit to Thailand of Cambodian Co-Premier Hun Sen, saying he was a "tool" for Vietnam which wanted to stir up unrest in Cambodia and the rest of South East Asia.

Mr. Hun Sen and his allies are "the tools of the Vietnamese," and the Phnom Penh government is a "puppet... fanning the flames of Vietnam's aggressive war in Cambodia and threatening the other nations of South East Asia," the radio said.

Ramos receives Spanish king, queen

MANILA (AP) — Spain's King Juan Carlos and Queen Sofia received the traditional 21-gun salute Sunday at the Philippine presidential palace, which once served as the official residence of Spanish governors-general.

The royal couple arrived Saturday on a four-day visit, the first by a reigning Spanish monarch to the Philippines.

President Fidel Ramos received the king and queen at Malacanang Palace, which was home to Spanish governors-general and subsequently of American governors. The United States seized the Philippine islands in 1898, ending 350 years on Spanish rule.

Later the royal couple lunched with Mr. Ramos and first lady Amelita at the Cafe Ilustrado in Intramuros, Manila's so-called "walled city" which served as fortress for Spanish rulers during colonial times.

In the afternoon, King Carlos received the Golden Cross Award from the Pontifical and Royal University of Santo Tomas, Asia's oldest university built by the Spaniards.

The 57-year-old monarch is the direct descendant of King Carlos III, who conferred in 1785 the title "royal" to the university.

have divided loyalties. "Young officers are very irritated because while they are suffering and fighting the war, others are making millions," Mr. Aguilera said.

Charges by U.S. representative Robert Torricelli, a New Jersey Democrat, that Colonel Julio Roberto Alpizar ordered the killings of a U.S. citizen and a rebel married to a U.S. lawyer have sent shockwaves through the army which often considers itself above the rule of law.

"The army has never allowed anyone to point the finger at individuals. You can attack the institution but if you attack people the death squads will get you," Mr. Aguilera said.

According to rights activist Helen Mack whose sister, anthropologist Myrna Mack was killed by the security forces in 1990, the army has never sacrificed one of its



Women's rights activists march to draw the Clinton who arrived in the Bangladeshi capital attention of U.S. first lady Hillary Rodham for a three-day visit (AFP photo)

Mrs. Clinton arrives in Bangladesh

DHAKA (AFP) — U.S. first lady Hillary Clinton arrived in Dhaka Sunday on a three-day visit to Bangladesh, airport officials said.

Bangladesh Foreign Minister Mustafizur Rahman and his wife greeted Mrs. Clinton and her daughter Chelsea at Dhaka's Zia International Airport on arrival from Kathmandu an hour behind schedule.

Mrs. Clinton, the first U.S. first lady to visit Bangladesh, is on a five-nation South Asian tour. She has visited Pakistan, India and Nepal and from Dhaka she will fly on to Sri Lanka.

"Mrs. Clinton is very excited about her trip to Bangladesh," UNB news agency quoted her spokesman as saying on arrival at airport. The U.S. first lady is due to

meet President Abdur Rahman Biswas at Bangabhaban presidential palace before attending a reception for leading Bangladeshi women and personalities at the U.S. embassy.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and her political rival, Sheikh Hasina Wajed of the main opposition Awami League, are among some 300 guests expected at the reception, newspapers here reported.

Mrs. Clinton is to travel to western Jessore district Monday to see village women at work and children in school.

Unlike her arrival in Nepal there were no demonstrators there to meet her. However Bangladeshi women's rights group to get a message to her asking her to stop the marketing of an

American birth control method called "Norplant," alleging it violated biomedical ethics and human rights.

A citizens' group which plans a "flower procession" here Monday to welcome the U.S. first lady, called for her intervention to stop the passage of the Harkin's Bill, which is to ban American companies from importing goods made by children under 14 years old.

The bill has caused problems for Bangladeshi garments factories, whose owners reportedly sacked most of the 60,000 child labourers to avert U.S. import sanctions.

Bangladesh earns \$2 billion annually from the export of readymade garments, half the exports being to the United States.

Cambodia sends tanks against rebels

NIMIT, Cambodia (R) — Cambodian tanks, including recently purchased Russian-designed T-55s, are proving a big morale-booster for government troops battling Khmer Rouge guerrillas around a key rebel base in the northwest Phnom Malai Hills, officers said.

However analysts and soldiers have cautioned that early rains could critically effect the use of armour in current fighting near the Thai-Cambodian border at Poipet.

"The new tanks are very effective — their gun range is about seven kilometres with the 100 mm," said Lieutenant-Colonel Sin Son, a senior officer attached to Division 12.

Colonel Son, who was wounded by a Khmer Rouge booby trap in fighting around the approaches to Phnom Malai, spoke to Reuters late last week from a bed at his command post at Nimit, 12 kilometres east of the border town of Poipet.

The officer warned that early rains could hamper the mobility of the 35 tonne tanks.

"When it rains — it makes the soil soft. Sometimes they (tanks) get stuck," he said. Col. Son said 10 tanks were being used in the current drive against Khmer Rouge

rebels near Klar Ngap, an insurgent stronghold lying south of Poipet and about 13 kilometres from Phnom Malai.

Government infantry soldiers told Reuters that without the support of tanks it would be very difficult to advance against the Khmer Rouge defenders at Klar Ngap.

"The Khmer Rouge ran at us — they are very fierce. But we had six tanks. They (Khmer Rouge) retreated when they saw the tanks. They're scared but before they retreated they fired two rounds at the tanks from a DK-82 (recoilless rifle)," said Vang Sarom, 25, who was wounded in fighting near Klar Ngap.

"We couldn't push them (Khmer Rouge) out without tanks," he said.

The Cambodian army traditionally uses tanks as mobile artillery but with land mines and booby-traps causing the bulk of the casualties near Malai, the tanks also offer a means of transport for the soldiers.

With only 10 tanks and an estimated 1,000 soldiers involved in the operation near Phnom Malai, it is unlikely that the government intends to make a full scale attempt to seize the rebel's moun-

tainous stronghold which they have held since 1989.

It required an estimated 18,000 battle-hardened Vietnamese soldiers backed by massed tanks and artillery to capture Phnom Malai from the Khmer Rouge in February, 1985.

Ironically, the Khmer Rouge are currently making good use of the network of bunkers and tunnels dug by the former Vietnamese occupiers of Malai before their withdrawal from Cambodia in 1989.

Analysts said the current operation is more likely aimed at providing increased security along National Route 5 to Poipet, a thriving centre of commerce for border-based Thai and Cambodian traders.

The Khmer Rouge Sunday blasted the visit to Thailand of Cambodian Co-Premier Hun Sen, saying he was a "tool" for Vietnam which wanted to stir up unrest in Cambodia and the rest of South East Asia.

Mr. Hun Sen and his allies are "the tools of the Vietnamese," and the Phnom Penh government is a "puppet... fanning the flames of Vietnam's aggressive war in Cambodia and threatening the other nations of South East Asia," the radio said.

CIA charges fuel instability in Guatemalan army

GUATEMALA CITY (R) — The naming of army officers allegedly involved in human rights abuses while on the CIA payroll has delivered a double blow to Guatemala's army which is unused to having its dirty linen washed in public.

The army has publicly played down the impact of charges made in the United States that officers were employed by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and killed U.S. and Guatemalan citizens but analysts say internally the institution is in turmoil.

Soldiers who had been taught the United States is no friend of the military because it cut off aid in the late 1970's are angry to discover their bosses allegedly were receiving payoffs from the CIA, academic Gabriel Aguilera said.

Some are resentful members of the fiercely-nationalistic institution may

have divided loyalties. "Young officers are very irritated because while they are suffering and fighting the war, others are making millions," Mr. Aguilera said.

Charges by U.S. representative Robert Torricelli, a New Jersey Democrat, that Colonel Julio Roberto Alpizar ordered the killings of a U.S. citizen and a rebel married to a U.S. lawyer have sent shockwaves through the army which often considers itself above the rule of law.

"The army has never allowed anyone to point the finger at individuals. You can attack the institution but if you attack people the death squads will get you," Mr. Aguilera said.

According to rights activist Helen Mack whose sister, anthropologist Myrna Mack was killed by the security forces in 1990, the army has never sacrificed one of its

own to appease public opinion over human rights violations.

Human rights groups accuse the army of razing over 400 Mayan villages in the early 1980's and blame the military for killing most of the 100,000 Guatemalans who have lost their lives during the three-decade civil war.

But the only official ever sentenced for his excesses was Captain Hugo Contreras, who was convicted of the 1990 killing of hotelier Michael Devine but mysteriously escaped from a military base hours later.

The timing of the scandal which broke in Washington could not be worse for the army which is negotiating an end to the civil war with leftist rebels of the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unit (URNG).

The role of the army in a democratic society is one of

the points to be discussed in the next few months and the recent scandal strengthens the hand of the URNG, Ms. Mack said.

According to Ms. Mack, even before the CIA scandal broke in Washington, the army was fighting a bitter internal battle on how to deal with corrupt members.

Weeks earlier, a former guerrilla, Danilo Rodriguez, publicly accused the defence minister's chief of defence staff Colonel Luis Fernandez Ligorria of drug trafficking and running car theft rings.

According to one foreign observer who asked not to be named, the information released by Mr. Rodriguez came from Guatemalan intelligence sources inside the army in a bid to root out corruption in the military.

"Pandora's box has been opened here... anything could happen," Ms. Mack said.

Business & Finance

A review of economic news from the Arabic press

Jordan to present 56 projects costing \$10.4 billion to Amman summit

Amman will present lists of 56 investment projects to the participants in the Amman Economic Summit which is scheduled for October this year. The projects, which were reduced from an earlier estimate of 77, carry an approximate cost of \$10.4 billion.

The projects were prepared according to specific criteria and were classified into private sector, regional, public sector or infrastructure schemes. In the energy sector, the list includes six projects, valued at \$3.948 million, of which \$3 billion are for the Red Sea-Dead Sea canal project and \$500 million for a petroleum refinery in Aqaba.

The industrial sector includes nine projects valued at \$1.734 billion of which \$1 billion will go for a factory to produce phosphoric acid. The list comprises 23 transport projects at a cost of \$1.841 billion spread as follows: \$582 million for 11 road projects, \$1.142 million for six railway projects, \$35 million for two projects in Aqaba and \$82 million for airport and aviation projects.

The list includes eight communication projects for \$400 million and four tourism projects for \$1,200 million of which \$500 million are to develop the Dead Sea tourist area and another \$300 million to develop the Aqaba tourist area. Six water projects costing \$1,280 million will be proposed including bringing the Disi water to Amman at a \$450 million cost (Al Dustour).

The Ministry of Water and Irrigation is studying the possibility of bringing water from the Al Disi Basin to Amman and other areas. Engineering studies indicate the possibility of using the basin's water for the next 80 years (Al Dustour).

Ten thousand telephone lines in Amman have been partially disconnected for subscriber's failure to settle their dues of about JD 1.5 million to the Telecommunications Corporation (Al Dustour).

THE MINISTER of finance approved the placing of about JD 1 million with the Department of Customs as a trust to be used for quick refunding to concerned industrialists of fees and taxes imposed on foreign materials — temporary entry — used in national products. As such, refunds can be collected more easily and directly without having to pass through a month-long routine at the Ministry of Finance (Al Aswaj).

PRICES OF locally-made Rothman Kingsize and Karim Super were fixed by the Ministry of Supply at 850 fils and 500 fils respectively (Petra).

THE MINISTRY of Water and Irrigation approved new charges for irrigation water in the Jordan Valley. The new charges were cleared by the agricultural and irrigation committee at the Lower House and representatives from the ministries of agriculture, finance and water and irrigation in addition to the Farmers Federation. Jordan Valley farmers consuming between one to 2,500 cubic metres a month will be charged eight fils per cubic metre. Charges will be 12 fils a cubic metre for those who consume between 2,501 to 3,500 cubic metres. The third category, with consumption between 3,501 to 4,500 cubic metres, is to pay 15 fils a cubic metre while those consuming 4,501 cubic metres and above will be paying 35 fils per cubic metre. Current charges are six fils per cubic metre (Al Dustour).

Qatar seeks gas ventures in China, India

DOHA (R) — Qatar has set up joint committees with India and China to explore possible joint ventures in the gas industry. Qatar's oil minister said.

Abdullah Bin Hamad Al Attiyah told reporters after returning on Saturday night from a 10-day tour of the two countries that two joint committees have been set up.

"The committees would look into various aspects, like how we can supply natural gas to both India and China and also set up joint ventures in gas-based industries," he said.

Qatar — which has the world's third largest gas reserves — is keen to sign firm agreements with Asian cus-

tomers for its gas, which is vital to help its multi-billion dollar liquefied natural gas (LNG) projects get off the ground.

Mr. Attiyah met officials from Indian companies such as the state-owned Gas Authority of India Limited (GAIL) and discussed ways of marketing Qatari gas.

"We are working with both state-owned and private companies to supply gas to India," he said.

GAIL officials visiting Doha last month said India wanted to import 50 billion-70 billion cubic metres (1.8 billion-2.5 trillion cubic feet) day of gas from Qatar to meet its requirements by the

year 2000. They had suggested the extension of a proposed Oman-India or Qatar-Pakistan gas pipelines or the creation of a new LNG joint venture in Qatar to supply liquefied gas to India.

But Mr. Attiyah said the options proposed by India were not under consideration, implying that India instead would have to buy gas from one of Qatar's projects.

Qatar has already signed memorandums of understanding to supply 2.5 million tonnes a year of LNG to India's private conglomerate, Essar Group. It has also signed deals to sell 200,000 tonnes a year of liquid ammo-

nia to two private firms. Mr. Attiyah said China was a good future market and Qatar was "working very hard to be in the Chinese market."

He did not say if he agreed with Chinese officials on signing a firm agreement on buying Qatari gas. Qatar and China have signed a memorandum of understanding for 2.5 million tonnes a year of LNG, with an option for a further 2.5 million tonnes for 25 years from mid-1999.

Mr. Attiyah said he plans to visit Pakistan on April 22 for talks likely to include a proposed undersea gas pipeline to carry gas from Qatar's Ras Laffan port to Pakistan.

Egyptian share offer sold out in one day

CAIRO (R) — The Egyptian state's latest privatisation offering sold out in one day was heavily oversubscribed, the agent for the sale said Sunday.

The trustee department of state-owned Banque Misr told Reuters it was no longer accepting applications for the \$24.000 shares in extracted oils and derivatives company because of the heavy demand last Thursday.

The offer was originally set to run for three working days — Thursday, then Sunday and Monday.

The state's holding Company for Food Industries, which owns extracted oils and derivatives, offered the shares at a fixed price of 45 pounds (\$13) each. The shares on sale represent 10 per cent of the company's total equity.

A Banque Misr official said it was too early to say exactly how many shares were applied for. Some previous privatisations have been heavily oversubscribed, one of them eight times over.

The government newspaper Al Ahram Sunday quoted the minister in charge of privatisation as saying his new target was to sell off assets worth eight billion pounds (\$2.4 billion) in the remaining nine months of the year.

Public Sector Minister Atef Obeid said this would include 10 per cent of the equity of 42 profitable companies in the food, chemical, textile, pharmaceutical, housing and tourism industries and in agriculture.

Hyundai reports higher car exports to M.E.

ABU DHABI (AFP) — South Korea's auto giant Hyundai has boosted car exports to the Middle East and will take advantage of the muscular Japanese yen to bid for a larger market share, a company official said Sunday.

Its exports to the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) stood at around 42,000 cars in 1994 and it expects them to grow by around 20 per cent to more than 50,000, Hyundai's export operations director, Ki Hong, told the United Arab Emirates (UAE) daily Al Khaleej.

This compares with 27,000 cars in 1993 and around 16,000 cars in 1992, he was quoted as saying in Seoul.

He said the increase had boosted South Korea's share in the Gulf car market to between six and seven per cent, but added: "A fair share is 10 per cent."

"The Japanese yen will help us" to boost car sales in

the Gulf and Middle East, he added.

He said he expected Hyundai's total car sales to the oil-rich Gulf and other Middle East countries to reach around 100,000 vehicles in 2000, accounting for nearly five per cent of the company's production.

Mr. Ki said Hyundai was also considering opening a marketing centre in Dubai's Jebel Ali free trade zone to boost exports to the lucrative region, which imports between 600,000 and 700,000 cars a year. Japan and the United States have dominated such a market despite strong competition from other car makers.

Mr. Ki said Hyundai was also seeking to boost its share in the U.S. market after it expanded its production units there. He said his company currently accounts for 1.5 per cent of the U.S. vehicle market while 10 per cent is controlled by Japan's Toyota and a similar share by Honda.

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET

HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - SWEISARI		FOR SUNDAY 02/04/1995	
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST		FOR SUNDAY 02/04/1995	
COMPANY'S NAME	NO. OF SHARES TRADED	VALUE	PRICE
ARAB BANK P.C.	1300	252110	190.000 195.000
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	1309	21112	280 4.590
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK / NEW	1756	12527	4.500 4.570
BANK OF JORDAN	350	1176	3.200 3.260
MIDDLE EAST INVESTMENT BANK	450	6100	1.300 1.350
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BANK	2550	7282	2.800 2.850
THE HOUSING BANK	11735	72387	6.100 6.210
JORDAN KUNAIF BANK	1740	5069	2.900 3.000
JORDAN GULF BANK	1922	2499	1.240 1.300
JORDAN ISLAMIC BANK	27212	107963	3.910 3.950
BUSINESS BANK	5550	2755	5.000 5.100
JORDAN INVESTMENT & FINANCE BANK	3200	11628	3.590 3.650
BEIT ELMAL SAVINGS INVESTMENT FOR HOUSING	2500	1500	1.500 1.550
AMMAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	273050	33923	1.200 1.250
ARAB BANKING CORPORATION/JORDAN	407	1646	4.000 4.100
PHILADELPHIA INVESTMENT BANK	25550	25928	1.300 1.370
BANKS SECTOR	379271	547674	INDEX NUMBER: 124.71
JORDAN FRENCH INSURANCE	45300	122405	2.070 2.050
INSURANCE SECTOR	49300	130404	INDEX NUMBER: 135.20
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER	6600	11056	1.70 1.750
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER / NEW	55013	8915	1.60 1.650
ARAB INTERNATIONAL HOTELS	10130	29781	4.380 4.500
ARAB INTERNATIONAL HOTELS / NEW	5113	32979	3.440 3.450
JORDAN NATIONAL SHIPPING LINES	5200	15851	3.040 3.050
NATIONAL PORTFOLIO SECURITIES	1250	7250	1.800 2.200
REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT	400	480	1.200 1.250
UNITED MIDDLE EAST & COMMODORE HOTELS	91800	238684	2.520 2.600
ARAB INVER. FOR INVESTMENT & EDUCATION	200	664	3.330 3.350
SERVICES SECTOR	175700	457467	INDEX NUMBER: 139.01
ATTAKEEP CONST. MATERIAL MANUFACTURING	550	609	1.080 1.080
THE JORDAN CEMENT FACTORIES	118673	36219	3.00 3.050
THE ARAB POTASH/NEW	150	703	4.600 4.650
JORDAN PETROLEUM REFINERY	510	481	9.400 9.450
THE INDUSTRIAL COMMERCIAL & AGRICULTURAL	572	2056	3.600 3.600
THE JORDAN WOODSTOCK MILLS	2000	15450	7.750 7.750
ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURING	27826	117489	4.180 4.240
JORDAN CERAMIC INDUSTRIES	250	1438	5.750 5.780
JORDAN DAIRY	400	1094	2.730 2.710
THE JORDAN PIPES MANUFACTURING	1100	11208	10.180 10.180
ARAB CHEMICAL DETERGENTS INDUSTRIES	32019	30397	9.45 9.500
SPINNING & WEAVING	2000	3025	1.50 1.520
ARAB INVESTMENT & INTERNATIONAL TRADE	16380	118943	7.30 7.350
ARAB ALUMINUM INDUSTRY	32019	17183	5.350 5.390
ARAB PAPER CONVERTING & TRADING	16380	76043	4.60 4.650
INTERMEDIATE PETRO-CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	3750	1350	3.60 3.650
JORDAN ROCKWOOL INDUSTRIES	7050	8646	1.20 1.250
JORDAN STEEL INDUSTRIES	1400	8646	1.10 1.150
ALAMIN INDUSTRIES	750	3175	4.150 4.200
JORDAN CABLE & MATCHES/JINCO	16500	35424	4.500 4.500
NATIONAL CABLE WIRE MANUFACTURING	3300	5125	1.500 1.550
JORDAN SULPHUR-CHEMICALS	500	830	1.650 1.650
ARAB CEMENT FACTORY - CHEMICALS	500	830	1.650 1.650
KAFER INVESTMENT	10100	25924	2.540 2.600
UNIVERSAL MODERN INDUSTRIES	1850	1850	2.540 2.600
JORDAN INDUSTRIAL RESOURCES CO.	1850	1850	2.540 2.600
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR	466185	932174	INDEX NUMBER: 121.71
GRAND TOTAL	1070462	2467718	INDEX NUMBER: 11.97
NO. OF TRADED SHARES IN PARALLEL MARKET	139623		
VALUE TRADED IN PARALLEL MARKET	157480		

Financial Markets

Jordan Times
In co-operation with
Cairo Amman Bank

Foreign Exchange Market Summary (March 27 - March 31, 1995)

AMMAN — The dollar depreciated sharply against other major currencies at the end of last week. It ended the week 3.23 per cent lower against the mark, 2.71 per cent lower against the yen 1.79 lower against sterling.

The U.S. unit retreated against the mark and sterling at the beginning of the week, while appreciating against the yen. The dollar's decline came in view of market participants position adjustments ahead of the Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) meeting the next day and the Bundesbank council meeting on Thursday.

The dollar witnessed a sharp decline against other major currencies Tuesday, influenced by the FOMC decision to keep U.S. monetary policy unchanged. The dollar also retreated on the back of a decline in U.S. Treasury bond prices. Treasuries fell after the release of new positive U.S. economic reports, promoting inflationary fears. The confidence board confidence index showed a large increase in March, while retail sales showed a rise of 1.3 per cent during the last week of the same month.

The dollar continued its depreciation against the mark and yen Wednesday, while rising slightly against sterling. Market participants' continued reaction to the FOMC decision the previous day contributed to further dollar declines. The dollar came under added pressure following the release of U.S. new home sales showing a decline of 14 per cent in March, its biggest decline since April 1992.

The dollar rose sharply against other major currencies Thursday, in response to a Bundesbank monetary easing. The Bundesbank lowered its discount rate from 4.5 per cent to four per cent, citing concerns over a drop in the German money supply and recent mark strength.

The U.S. unit retreated against other major currencies Friday. It fell on disappointment after the Bank of Japan did not lower its discount rate, a move which had been widely expected by market participants. The dollar also depreciated on rumours that the Fed planned a press conference to discuss its currency's situation. But, a Fed denial of the rumours later that day, added more pressure on the dollar. On the economic front, fourth quarter U.S. GDP was revised to show an annual rise of 5.1 per cent, compared with an initial estimate of a 4.6 per cent rise. Meanwhile, February factory goods orders and March Chicago purchasing managers index and Michigan consumer sentiment showed signs of a slowing economic activity in the U.S.

The U.S. unit, thus ended the week at 1.3730 marks, 86.60 yen and at \$1.6225 to sterling.

New York Closing Rates for Major Currencies Against the U.S. Dollar

Currency	24/3/95 Close	31/3/95 Close	Percent Change
Sterling Pound*	1.5940	1.6225	1.79%
Deutsche Mark	1.4173	1.3730	3.23%
Swiss Franc	1.1748	1.1295	3.96%
French Franc	4.9865	4.8090	3.73%
Japanese Yen	88.95	86.60	2.71%

* USD Per STD

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin

Date: 2/4/1995		
Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.6640*	0.6660
Sterling Pound	1.1080	1.1135
Deutsche Mark	0.4982	0.5007
Swiss Franc	0.6050	0.6050
French Franc	0.1424	0.1431
Japanese Yen*	0.7895	0.7934
Dutch Guilder	0.4446	0.4452
Swedish Krona	*****	*****
Italian Lira*	0.0401	0.0403
Belgian Franc	*****	*****

* Per 100

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Family Circle Cup

Martinez to face Maleeva in final

HILTON HEAD ISLAND, South Carolina (AP) — Second-seeded Conchita Martinez took another step in her defence of the Family Circle Cup title Saturday with a straight set semi-final victory over Natasha Zvereva.

Martinez, ranked fourth in the world and the highest seed left in the event, needed less than an hour to defeat Zvereva, the fourth seed, 6-1, 6-2.

In the final she will meet fifth-seeded Magdalena Maleeva, who beat Italian Silvia Farina 6-4, 7-6 (7/5).

"My confidence is back," said Martinez, who has not won a tournament since she became the first Spanish woman to win Wimbledon last summer, adding, "I think I played very well."

Martinez' chances of retaining the title she won here last year improved on Friday, when top-seed and world number-one Arantxa Sanchez withdrew from the quarter-finals with a severely sprained ankle.

Sanchez injured her right ankle in a third-round victory over Amanda Coetzer of South Africa. A bone scan on Saturday showed a stress fracture, and Sanchez planned to return home to Andorra to rest on Sunday.



Bulgaria's Magdalena Maleeva

Kathleen, Stroia, the WTA Tour's director of sports, said the injury would need three to six weeks to heal.

"I'm a person who always thinks positive," said Sanchez, whose withdrawal from the tournament starting on Monday in Amelia, Island, Florida, could put her world number one ranking in jeopardy.

"The most important thing now is to recover and come back strong."

Martinez, who struggled to a three-set victory over Croatian Iva Majoli in the quarter-finals, looked more sure of herself against Zvereva, runner-up here last year.

"I don't think she'll have any problems whoever she's playing," Zvereva said.

Maleeva, who celebrated her 20th birthday on Saturday, reached her fifth final in seven tournaments. She has won three of her four previous finals, at Moscow, Linz and Chicago.

She also followed in the footsteps of elder sister Manuela Maleeva, who was runner-up to Steffi Graf here in 1987.

Maleeva let slip a 3-0 lead in the second set and trailed 5-1 in the tiebreaker before storming back.

"I was nervous," she said. "I relaxed when I was down, figuring I'd give up the set and that's when I started hitting well."

Injured Sanchez will lose ranking April 10

HILTON HEAD, South Carolina (R) — The ankle injury that world No. 1 Arantxa Sanchez Vicario sustained at the Family Circle Magazine Cup will keep her out of action for a few weeks and will cost her the prestigious top ranking.

Sanchez Vicario, who returned to Spain Sunday, has withdrawn from next week's Bausch Lomb championships at Amelia Island, Florida. That unavoidable move will put Germany's Steffi Graf, also not playing at Amelia Island, back atop women's tennis as of April 10.

On Thursday, Sanchez Vicario landed wrong on her right ankle during a third-round match against South African Amanda Coetzer. Although she persevered to

win that match, she was unable to play Friday's quarter-final against Magdalena Maleeva.

"It's my first injury in my whole life," said Sanchez Vicario, her wrapped foot hoisted onto a table top. "It happens to everybody and I'm pretty strong, so I'll take it with confidence. It's not the end of the world. I just want to come back healthy and be very good again."

The verdict is that Sanchez Vicario sustained three different injuries to her right ankle.

The most serious problem is a fracture to her fibula which was discovered Saturday through a bone scan. She also sprained a ligament on the outside part of the ankle and strained the anterior

tibialis muscle in the front of the ankle.

"We're most concerned about the stress fracture because a stress fracture can develop into a fracture if not cared for properly," said Kathleen Stroia, the WTA Tour's director of sports science and medicine.

"For a bone to heal it takes three to six weeks and would have to be re-examined throughout the healing process."

"I think I'm young. I have a long way to go and the most important thing now is to recover," Sanchez Vicario.

"Hopefully, I can come back and return to the number one spot again. But right now, it is my foot that is the most important thing."

She hasn't formally withdrawn from the Federation

Cup the weekend of April 22 and a tournament in Barcelona the week of April 24. But Stroia said: "The Fed Cup in three weeks time would be difficult. Barcelona would be more realistic."

The last two times the women's top ranking has changed hands has been because the player holding the honours was injured.

Sanchez Vicario took the world number one ranking for the first time in her career on February 6, 1995, from Graf, who was on sabbatical first with a back injury and then with a right calf muscle problem.

Including next week, Sanchez Vicario will have held the top position for a total of eight weeks, including the last six consecutive weeks.

UCLA, Arkansas advance to title game

SEATTLE (R) — The top-ranked UCLA Bruins beat stubborn Oklahoma State and the defending champion Arkansas Razorbacks held off North Carolina on Saturday to advance to the national men's college basketball championship game.

The Razorbacks (32-6), who survived several close calls earlier in the tournament, came back from a four-point halftime deficit to win 75-68 as power forward Corliss Williamson poured in 19 second-half points and Arkansas staged off a last-minute comeback attempt by Carolina.

The Bruins (30-2) were led by tiny guard Tyus Edney, who scored 21 points, and brothers Ed and Charles O'Bannon, who combined for 34, as they overwhelmed 14th-ranked Oklahoma state 74-61.

Arkansas coach Nolan Williamson, who has faced scrutiny all year as his championship team fell to as low as 12th in the national rankings, said he hoped to silence the

sceptics once and for all with a victory Monday night here in the Kingdome, where 39,000 fans watched the semi-finals.

"Deep inside and in our hearts we know...that we have had a phenomenal season," he said. "We took everybody's best shot — everybody's. We've got a game to go and let's hope that we end the fairy tale story."

Most of the attention was focused on the 152-pound (69 kg) senior Edney, who controlled the Bruins' rapid-fire offence and dazzled the crowd with his driving layups.

"He's carried the team for four years," said Ed O'Bannon. "He's gotten us to where we are today."

Carolina (28-6) staged a late comeback despite going more than 12 minutes without a field goal in the second half.

But with eight seconds left, Tar Heels centre Donald Williams missed a 3-point shot that would have tied the game.

"You have to hand it to our players that came back and had a great chance to win the game," said Dean Smith, in his 10th final four appearance. "We didn't get exactly what we wanted in the last 18 seconds. Still, anytime

Donald has an open look he has the green light."

Arkansas was boosted by 55-foot Basket Heaved in by centre Dwight Stewart at the first-half buzzer.

"I got a good look at the basket, shot it, followed through and it went," he said. "We practice those kind of shots in practice, every practice."

Oklahoma State's seven-foot (2.13 metres), 292-pound (132 kg) centre Bryant "Big Country" Reeves, who dominated the inside game in the first half, hit only three of eight field goals in the second half and was kept at bay by UCLA's Czech-born centre George Zidek.

"It was pretty physical, as I expected," said Zidek.

The Razorbacks' number one fan, President Clinton, is said to be highly unlikely to attend Monday's game, although he went to Charlotte, North Carolina, last year to see the Hogs win their first title and watched Saturday's game from Little Rock, Arkansas.

NCAA BASKETBALL

Monday's championship game is the first for Harrick, who has amassed a .686 winning percentage in his 16-year career but labours in the shadow of UCLA's legendary John Wooden, who coached the Bruins to 10 titles in 12 years.

"It's a goal and dream and aspiration of every coach that's ever come on the floor to bring your team to this game, and hopefully win it," Harrick said. "It's a great, great feeling for me."

Jordan held to 12 points; Jazz, Rockets upset

ANAHEIM (R) — Sometimes the most dangerous adversaries are the ones with nothing to lose. Just ask the Utah Jazz.

Lamond Murray had 26 points and 13 rebounds and Loy Vaught added 21 points and 16 rebounds as the lowly Los Angeles Clippers beat the Jazz 116-98 on Saturday.

Karl Malone scored 37 points and John Stockton added 16 for Utah (52-21), which fell a game behind the San Antonio Spurs in the race for the Midwest Division lead.

"We didn't stop anybody," said Malone. "They played hard and with nothing to lose. We have to bounce back. We have a big game against Seattle coming up."

Murray scored 12 of his points in the third quarter as Los Angeles, the worst team in the league at 15-58, outscored the Jazz 34-23.

"Even though I played 48 minutes tonight, I didn't feel tired like I did in the beginning of the season, especially late in the game," said Murray, who has averaged 24 points per game over his last four contests. "It's the end of the season, and this win meant a lot for us."

The Clippers outscored Utah 65-44 in the second half and made 17-of-22 free throws in the fourth quarter.

"We did not get rattled at the end of the game, we were up pressing them at the end of the game to force mistakes," Los Angeles coach Bill Fitch said. "We were going to hold onto the ball until they tore our arms off for us to shoot free throws."

Pooh Richardson scored 15 of his 18 points in the first half, keeping Los Angeles within striking distance, as the Clippers trailed 56-33 at halftime.

Los Angeles shot 51 per cent (40-of-78) from the field for the game and made 30-of-38 free throws.

Utah lost for just the fifth time in the last 19 games between the teams.

In Chicago, Michael Jordan was off his game but Scottie Pippen scored 18 points and B.J. Armstrong netted five in a 123 fourth-quarter run as the Bulls defeated the Philadelphia 76ers 91-84 for their fourth straight victory.

The Bulls clinched at least the sixth playoff berth in the Eastern Conference.

Armstrong finished with 17 points for Chicago, which moved to within a game of the Cleveland Cavaliers for the fifth spot in the Eastern Conference playoff race.

Jordan, who has made no secret of his preference for the old Chicago stadium over the Bulls' new home in the United Centre, struggled with 12 points on 5-of-19 shooting but had six assists.

"I'm going to take time, for me to adjust to the building," Jordan said. "It just doesn't quite feel like home to me just yet. Today, I hate this building."

The Bulls have won the last seven games against Philadelphia and swept the season series for the first time since the 1972-73 season.

Clarence Weatherspoon scored 27 points for Philadelphia, which failed in its bid for a season-high third straight win. Shawn Bradley added 10 points and 14 rebounds, for the Sixers, who have dropped four straight on the road.

In Houston, Glenn Robinson scored 29 points and grabbed nine rebounds as the Milwaukee Bucks took advantage of the underman-

ned Rockets for a 93-87 victory.

Vin Baker scored six of his 17 points and Robinson hit layup in an 8-0 fourth-quarter spurt that allowed the bucks to take a 90-83 lead with 1:25 remaining.

Clyde Drexler scored 23 points for Houston, which is without Centre Hakeem Olajuwon and guard Vernon Maxwell, who are both suffering from forms of anaemia.

Milwaukee stopped a seven-game losing streak at the summit dating back to the 1986-87 season.

Houston forward Robert Horry left the game with a strained lower back with 3:20 left in the third and did not return.

At Golden State, Isaiah Rider poured in a career-high 42 points as the Minnesota Timberwolves routed the Warriors 126-104 to stop a five-game losing streak.

Christian Laettner had 23 points and 13 rebounds and former Warrior Tom Gugliotta also scored 23 points for the Timberwolves, who recorded their most lopsided victory of the season. Gugliotta was playing his first game against his former teammates.

Donyell Marshall, who was acquired for Gugliotta on February 18, scored 27 points and grabbed 10 rebounds and Chris Mullin added 25 points, eight rebounds and seven assists for Golden State, which has lost six of its last seven games.

Rider hit 15-of-22 shots from the field and nailed seven 3-pointers.

RESULTS

Chicago	91	Philadelphia	84
Milwaukee	93	Houston	87
Minnesota	126	Golden State	104
La Clippers	116	Utah	98

Aching back keeps Agassi off court

PALERMO (Agencies) — The last time Andre Agassi risked injury had he taken the court.

U.S. captain Tom Gullikson, insisting the injury was legitimate, said Agassi's lower back was "so tight he couldn't play."

The result was meaningless since the United States had already clinched the tie on Saturday by taking a 3-0 lead and moved into the semi-finals against Sweden.

But the announcement that

Farred, asserting that Agassi risked injury had he taken the court.

Agassi's teammate and world No. 1 Pete Sampras called it "absurd" that the matches are required, but he played his.

"At the end of the day, rules are rules," Sampras said.

Agassi's appearance on the

Palmer was taking crowd-favourite Agassi's place drew derisive whistles from the 5,100 fans at the Palermo tennis club.

Agassi's teammate and world No. 1 Pete Sampras called it "absurd" that the matches are required, but he played his.

"At the end of the day, rules are rules," Sampras said.

Agassi's appearance on the

Davis Cup team was his first since the International Tennis Federation fined him \$2,500 in 1993 for failing to play against the Bahamas without an excuse after the United States had wrapped up the match.

The one-two punch of Sampras and Agassi, as expected, led the U.S. team to a 5-0 whitewash of Italy and into the Sept. 22-25 semifinals.

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Tom Hanks in Forrest Gump		Andy Garcia — Mee Ryan in When A Man Loves A Woman		CONCORD '1' Comedian star: Adel Imam — Bakhit & Andadileh		Musa Hijazin "Sum'a" in the political satire Hi Citizen	Presents Abu Awwad in the social comedy Punctured Bag	Presents: AL SALAM YA SALAM	
Shows: 12:30, 3:15, 6:15, 9:15		Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 5, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30		Shows: 12:30, 3:15, 6:00, 8:30, 11:00		written and directed by Mohammad Al Shawaqja daily on 8:30 p.m. The theatre closes on Monday — Halla Al Agha in the children's play Sa'di's Return	The theatre is closed on Mondays. Tickets are available all day	at 8:30 p.m. For reservation, please call 625155	
				CONCORD '2' Jean-Claude Van Damme STREET FIGHTER				The theatre is closed Saturdays & Sundays	
				Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 5:45, 11:00					

Sports

Hill keeps WBA light heavy crown

STATELINE, Nevada (R) — Virgil Hill of the United States retained his World Boxing Association light heavyweight championship on Saturday night, taking a 12-round unanimous decision over Crawford Ashley of England.

In a second world title fight on the card at a hotel-casino on the Nevada-California border, undefeated Ricardo Lopez of Mexico successfully defended his World Boxing Council strawweight championship for the 14th time by stopping Andy Tabanas of the Philippines at 2:45 of the 12th and final round.

Hill, now 18-1 in light heavyweight title fights since winning his first 175-pound (79 kg) championship in 1987, built up an early lead thanks to a stiff and accurate left jab to the head, winning the initial six rounds on all three judges' scorecards.

Hill finished strong, too, capturing three of the final four rounds on all judges' cards.

But Hill, who won by scores of 118-110, 118-110,

and 117-113, had trouble in the eighth round, when Ashley, ranked 10th by the WBA, hurt him with four rights and a left to the head. Hill survived the round, and a tiring Ashley could not duplicate that offensive performance during the final four rounds.

Hill almost stopped Ashley in the 12th. Only the bell saved Ashley, who was getting pounded with rights to the head.

"I started off slow," said Ashley. "I fought my heart out. I felt I fought a pretty good fight and that the outcome would be different."

Hill said that he believes he may have fractured his left hand during the bout. "Every time I jabbed with it, sharp pains were going up my arm," he said.

The 31-year-old Hill now has a record of 40-1 with 20 wins ending early. Ashley, 30, is 20-7-1 with 19 inside the distance.

The 27-year-old Lopez, now 40-0 with 30 bouts ending early, finished an outclassed Tabanas with a bar-

rage of blows to the head which prompted referee Mitch Halpern to halt the one-sided fight.

Tabanas, the WBC's second-ranked contender, rushed in during the first round and was jarred with a right to the head. After that Tabanas stayed outside and seldom mounted an attack.

"I wanted to fight Lopez in tight, but I couldn't get close to him," said the 25-year-old Tabanas, who now has a record of 30-3 with 19 bouts ending early.

Lopez was constant and accurate with his left jabs and combination rights to the head and body all 12 rounds. Lopez finally caught up with Tabanas in the 12th rounds, cutting him in the corner of the left eye and then battering him until the bout was stopped.

Lopez won the first 11 rounds on all three judges' scorecards and was ahead by scores of 110-99, 110-99, 110-98.

In his 15 strawweight world title fights Lopez has won 105 of the 111 rounds.

Baseball opening day set for April 26, replacement players sent home

NEW YORK (AP) — Opening day was postponed until April 26 and replacement players were sent packing Saturday to make way for the likely return of regular major leaguers as early as Monday if there isn't a lockout.

Management's lawyers told the 28 teams to release all replacement players by 11:59 p.m. EST Saturday (04:59 GMT Sunday).

"They just told us the season was over. They're not going to have replacement games. Everybody got their travel orders," Indians catcher Pete Kild said.

The new date for opening day was part of a tentative agreement reached Saturday night between the players and owners, according to a source who spoke on condition that he not be identified. Earlier in the day, the sides had discussed starting on Sunday, April 23, but decided to push the date back.

There appeared to be little chance owners will vote for a lockout when they meet Sunday in Chicago. Baseball officials said it had become ap-

parent that hard-line owners couldn't obtain the necessary 21 votes needed to start a lockout and continue the work stoppage that began Aug. 12.

"My guess is we're not going to lock out," New York Yankees owner George Steinbrenner told CBS Television. "Hopefully, we'll get this mess negotiated."

The season opener in Miami between the New York Mets and Florida Marlins was postponed at approximately 6 p.m. est (2300 GMT) Saturday after a meeting involving representatives for players and owners. Sunday's exhibition games, the final seven of replacement spring training, were canceled.

A decision on the nine regular-season games scheduled for Monday will be made during the owners' meeting.

Detroit Tigers manager Sparky Anderson, who refused to work with replacement players, was overjoyed that his regular players probably would start coming to camp

at Lakeland, Florida, on Monday.

"I'll go probably tomorrow night or Monday," he said from his home in Thousand Oaks, California. "Enough Golf is enough golf."

When Anderson left the team in February, the Tigers did not guarantee he would have a job when the regulars returned.

This marks the third time opening day was pushed back by a work stoppage. A strike in 1972 delayed it from April 1 to April 15, and a lockout in 1990 pushed it back from April 2 to April 9.

Regulars would have just three weeks of workouts under the schedule being discussed, the same as in 1990.

The prevailing feeling was that opening day would be pushed back to April 23 or 24.

After 7½ weeks of spring training, it was clear the replacement players would never take the field for a regular season.

A memo from management's lawyers to all clubs said:

"Although opening day will be delayed and there will be no replacement player reserve lists, you should terminate all your temporary replacement contracts by 11:59 p.m. tonight."

"I'm eating my last meal... chicken and ribs," said Craig Bryant, a replacement shortstop with the Seattle Mariners. "We knew something was happening when (manager) Lou Piniella left the bench in the fifth inning."

The Pirates' replacements were about to board a bus to the airport for a flight to Pittsburgh, but the team cancelled Sunday's workout at Three Rivers Stadium and kept the replacements in a Florida hotel overnight.

"I sort of expected it," said Jason Pfiiff, the Pirates' scheduled starter Monday against Montreal. "I wasn't going to believe it until we were actually on the plane. I wasn't going to believe it until we were actually standing at home plate."

Union lawyers met Saturday in New York with Chicago

go Cubs president Andy MacPhail and management lawyers to discuss the back-to-work schedule. The union ended its 232-day strike Friday after U.S. District Judge Sonia Sotomayor issued an injunction restoring old work rules.

National league senior vice president Katy Feeney said that if there isn't a lockout, the schedule for each team would be cut from 162 games to the 139-145 range.

According to one person familiar with the discussions, Monday would be the voluntary reporting date, which usually is 45 days before opening day. Wednesday is the mandatory reporting date, which usually is 33 days before the opener. An exception will be made for non-U.S. citizens, who were unable to obtain work visas during the 7½-month strike.

One agent said the Union would use the spring training camp in Homestead, Florida — which it had rented for a possible barnstorming tour — as a site for free-agent workouts.

Everton left fuming as Blackburn march on; Juventus take 9 point lead

LONDON (Agencies) — Blackburn Rovers went six points clear at the top of the English Premiership with a controversial 2-1 win over Everton on Saturday, keeping the pressure on defending champions Manchester United.

A goal bonanza across the country, in which defenders were the April Fools, also saw Nottingham Forest crush Sheffield Wednesday 7-1, Arsenal beat Norwich 5-1 and Wimbledon subdue bottom-placed Leicester 4-3.

Blackburn's famed SAS (Sutton and Shearer) squad, who brought their tally to 55 goals this season, did the damage against Everton.

But the legality of both goals was questionable and at the end of the match angry Everton fans barracked referee Dermot Gallagher, who also rejected at least four confident claims for penalties by the home team.

Chris Sutton, Rovers' five million pound man, kept up the repayments with the fastest goal in Premiership history — scoring after 16 seconds.

Six minutes later Everton went two down when striker Alan Shearer, who missed England's goalless draw with Uruguay through injury, notched his 34th goal of the season.

Everton made a storming fightback, with Graham Stuart finding the back of the net with a superb chip from

the edge of the box on 24 minutes and then almost grabbing an equaliser.

But after soaking up the pressure, Kenny Dalglish's men held on for a victory which means they now need just 16 points from their last 7 games to secure their first title since 1914.

Everton manager Joe Royle questioned both the goals after a result that increases the danger of relegation.

Royle asked: "Did you see a handball for the first one? And can anybody tell me why a free kick was given, which led to the second?"

Even Rovers manager Kenny Dalglish conceded: "They will feel unlucky, justifiably, not to get anything out of the game."

"But we are going to have to play a bit better to guarantee the title," he added.

Manchester United play Leeds at Old Trafford on Sunday and must win to maintain their campaign for a third consecutive Premiership title.

The most emphatic victory of the day went to fourth-placed Nottingham Forest, who annihilated Wednesday to stake their claim to a place in the UEFA Cup next season.

Skipper Stuart Pearce and Ian Woan struck in the first half, Dutchman Bryan Roy added two more after the break and then two goals in two minutes from star striker

Stan Collymore looked to have completed the rout.

But Norwegian World Cup star Lars Bohinen stepped up to make it a magnificent seven, with Mark Bright converting a consolation penalty for the home side.

Wednesday manager said the result hurt but paid tribute to Forest's irresistible performance.

Troubled Arsenal answered their critics with a morale-boosting victory — Welsh teenage two million pound signing John Hartson scoring twice inside the first 13 minutes.

be showing their fighting spirit, but they remain destined to leave 4-3 to Wimbledon.

Crystal Palace continued their battle against relegation with a 2-1 win over Manchester City.

Chris Armstrong's 13th goal of the season put Palace 1-0 up, but Germany's Uwe Rosler notched an equaliser for City before Northern Ireland defender Darren Patterson scored a rare but precious winner.

Queens Park Rangers, down to 10 men after 21

minutes when Ian Holloway was sent off for a second bookable offence, finished 1-0 winners at Coventry City, after Trevor Sinclair got the winner five minutes from time.

Aston Villa, aiming to ease their relegation worries, needed a 90th minute own goal by Chris Swales to beat second-from-bottom Ipswich 1-0.

Lyon held at Rennes

Lyon came away with a 1-1 draw from Rennes to consol-

date their second place in the French first division behind Nantes.

Jacelyn Gourvennec put Rennes clear after just seven minutes but Eric Roy equalised for the visitors midway through the second half.

Lyon now have 57 points from 30 matches while Nantes, still unbeaten in the league since the start of the season and facing Lens away on Sunday, have 66.

Lyon's draw came 24 hours after Paris St. Germain, who face AC Milan next week in the first-leg semi-final of the European Champion's Cup, defeated visiting Cannes 2-1.

Two goals in the first half an hour were enough for PSG — their goals coming from Jose Cobos and David Ginola (31). Charvet scored a consolation goal for Cannes with seven minutes left to play.

Nice and Strasbourg won their matches thanks to penalties — Fabrice Mege

scoring for Nice against Lille in the 53rd minute and Frank Leboeuf converting his spot kick in the dying seconds at Sochaux.

In other matches Auxerre's disappointing late season run continued when they were beaten 2-1 by Martigues, who, banned from playing at home, travelled to Angers for the match.

An own-goal after eight minutes by Franck Burnier gave Bordeaux victory at Bastia, a Laurent Blanc penalty after 73rd minutes enlivened Monaco's hopes at St. Etienne, and Montpellier scored their seventh win from 31 games by beating visiting Caen 3-2.

Juventus defeat Milan

Juventus took a giant step toward their first Italian league title in nine years on Saturday, opening up a commanding nine-point lead at the top of Serie A with a 2-0 win over reigning champions

AC Milan at the San Siro.

Goals at the end of each half from Fabrizio Ravanelli and Gianluca Vialli leave the Turin side on 58 points, nine clear of their nearest challengers Parma, defeated 1-0 at Roma, with just nine matches to play.

The prolific Ravanelli, who scored on his debut appearance for Italy against Estonia a week ago, put the visitors in front in the 41st minute.

Exchanging a one-two with Vialli, the white-haired striker raced clear of Franco Baresi before lobbing the ball over advancing goalkeeper Sebastiano Rossi and heading into an empty net for his 10th and possibly most crucial goal of the season.

Milan's best chance to equalise fell to Marco Simone in the 61st minute, but his neat turn and shot flew narrowly wide.

Vialli put the match beyond Milan's reach seven

minutes from the end, taking a defence-splitting pass from substitute Giancarlo Marocchi, feinting to shoot before beating the helpless Rossi with a shot into the far corner.

Dortmund move 2 points ahead

Borussia Dortmund moved two points clear in the Bundesliga on Saturday with a 3-1 win against Bayer Uerdingen.

Dortmund, four points ahead after the winter break in mid-February, earned third first win in five matches.

Martin Kree, Michael Zorc and Tanko scored for the table-toppers despite the absence of injured striker Stephane Chapuisat.

The 25-year-old faces surgery after tearing knee ligaments training with Borussia Dortmund on March 16 and is out for the rest of the season.

EUROPEAN SOCCER

The win virtually guarantees Arsenal's Premiership survival and also provides a boost prior to Thursday's match against Sampdoria at Highbury, when the European Cup Winners Cup holders defend their title in a semi-final first leg clash.

Third-placed Newcastle had a difficult trip to London, drawing 1-1 at injury-ravaged Chelsea, who have not won in the league at Stamford Bridge for almost five months.

Bottom club Leicester may

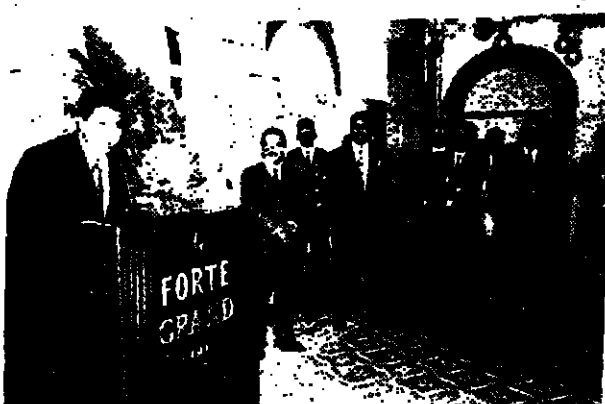
minutes when Ian Holloway was sent off for a second bookable offence, finished 1-0 winners at Coventry City, after Trevor Sinclair got the winner five minutes from time.

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KLM welcomes new regional director



THE ROYAL Dutch Airlines (KLM) hosted a grand reception at the Forte Grand Hotel on the occasion of appointing Mr. Fathi Sherif as new regional director of KLM in Jordan and to bid farewell to the former director.

The reception was attended by a large number of representatives of tour and travel agencies, airlines, embassies, journalists and businessmen.

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THE RIGHT ORDER

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NORTH
♠ A K J
♥ Q 10 7 8
♦ Q 8 2
♣ Q 8
WEST
♠ 10 8
♥ 9 8 5 2
♦ K 9
♣ J 10 8 7
EAST
♠ 9 7 6 5 4
♥ 7 6 5 4 3
♦ A Q J 5
♣ 8 8 4 2
SOUTH
♠ Q 8 2
♥ A K J 4
♦ 10 7 4
♣ A K 6
The bidding:
South West North East
1 NT Pass 2 ♠ Pass
2 ♥ Pass 4 ♥ Pass
Pass Pass
Opening lead: Jack of ♠
Bed trump breaks tend to mislead most declarers, with predictable results. If you keep your cool, you often can find an alternative line to lead your contract.
When either the closed hand or dummy has a ruffing value, a major-suit game on a 4-4 fit is usually preferable to three no trump. But when the doubtless to one or both hands is well guarded, that is not always the case. Here, North-South reached four hearts after locating a 4-4 fit when ten tricks were sure, unless the opponents started diamonds and could cash four or five fast tricks in the suit.
Declarer won the club lead in dummy and learned the bad news when a trump to the ace disclosed a spade discard from East. With three sure losers in diamonds, declarer could not afford to have a winner ruffed and South thought it made no difference in what order the top cards were cashed. Unfortunately, West ruffed the third spade—down one.
Declarer started off well enough, but should have cashed no more than two rounds of spades. Next came the remaining high spade. If West ruffed the third club, declarer overruffed, draws trumps and claims 10 tricks—five trumps, three spades and two clubs. If West follows to three rounds of clubs, declarer discards the jack of spades from the table and then ruffs a spade on the board. This way declarer assumes five trump tricks, two spades and three clubs. West's fifth trump and East's third diamond take the same trick.

NOTICE OF SALE

Date of Sale: Tuesday, April 4, 1995, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
Location: Warehouse near 7th Circle.
Items to be sold: Furniture, large generator, hydraulic lift and various office items.
Conditions of sale: This sale will be conducted by seal-bid. Bid forms will be available at time of sale. All items will be available for inspection at the time of sale.
A deposit of 20 per cent of the total bid is required at the time of bid.
All bidders will be notified and deposits refunded beginning on Wednesday, April 5, 1995.
All property must be removed within 24 hours of notification.
If not, a storage of JD 50 per day will be imposed. All bids must be deposited by 12:00 p.m. on April 4, 1995.
All property is sold on an as-is, where-is, non-returnable basis for cash payment without refund or warranty.

Algerian council meets on election

ALGIERS (Agencies) — The country's transitional parliament convened Sunday with an agenda including legislation to make it much more difficult to run in this year's presidential election.

The 180-member assembly, appointed by Algeria's military-backed leaders, are also scheduled to consider laws concerning privatisation of state-owned enterprises, restructuring the agriculture sector and regional planning.

About half of the assembly members, who were named a year ago and have the power to pass legislation, are bureaucrats and the rest are pro-government politicians.

The parliament is called "transitional" as new legislative elections are expected sometime after the presidential balloting, which is planned for later this year.

The body plans to pass legislation that requires presidential candidates to submit 75,000 signatures from eligible voters in 24 of the 48 provinces. Currently, candidates only have to submit 600 signatures.

The move is clearly designed to prevent anti-government Islamic candidates who have widespread support from making it onto the ballot. The legislation is expected to be passed this month.

Candidates, particularly from the fundamentalist Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), were handily winning legislative elections for a new parliament when the government cancelled the voting in January 1992.

That sparked the three-year civil war pitting radicals against government forces that has left an estimated more than 30,000 people dead.

A government offensive against a suspected guerrilla training camp last week killed 2,800 radicals, the newspaper Liberation reported. Earlier reports in Algerian media

said from several hundred to 1,300 insurgents had been killed.

The army, backed by artillery and paratroopers, were attacking a camp in Ain De-fla, about 150 kilometres west of Algiers, suspected of belonging to the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), the most violent of the shadowy groups waging the war.

A communiqué purporting to come from the GIA said the group lost 100 fighters in the operation. The authenticity of the statement could not be confirmed.

At the weekend, Foreign Minister Mohammed Salah Dembri, in an interview, was quoted by the official news agency APS as saying: "Terrorism is losing ground and the security situation is improving from day to day."

On Sunday, President Liamine Zeroul and the former sole ruling party, the National Liberation Front (FLN), held talks about the planned ballot.

Only weeks ago, such talks seemed out of the question. The FLN and another maverick secular party, the Socialist Forces Front (FFS), were castigated by the authorities for joining talks in Rome to produce their own proposals to end the crisis.

Damned as foreign interference by Algerians, the Rome talks in January included Anwar Haddad, an envoy of the now-outlawed FIS, a move guaranteed to antagonise the authorities.

Their proposals, for negotiations to lead to a transitional government and then to elections, were conditional on Islamist leaders first being freed from jail.

Diplomats said that with Algerians blaming the violence mainly on the FIS, on its armed wing, the Islamic Salvation Army (AIS), and on the Armed Islamic Group, the demand was impossible to fulfil.

Russia seeks larger role in peace process

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev stressed Sunday that Moscow had an important role to play in the Middle East peace process during his first visit to both Gaza and Israel.

"Russia is in a privileged position to push forward the Arab-Israeli peace process because of its objectivity," Mr. Kozyrev said after meeting Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.

"We have always been very close to the Arab states and we now have very good relations with Israel," he said.

Mr. Kozyrev gave Mr. Rabin a message from Russian President Boris Yeltsin.

Russia and the United States are co-sponsors of the Middle East peace process.

The Russian envoy also sought to calm Israeli fears on the delivery of Russian nuclear reactors to Iran, which the Jewish state has condemned.

"The reactors will be

used for exclusively peaceful purposes and will be subject to international control," he said.

Israel objects to the deal, saying it aids Iran's efforts to achieve nuclear weapons capability. Russia says the reactor cannot be used for military means.

After meeting with Israeli President Ezer Weizman, Mr. Kozyrev said he hoped better understanding was reached on "the issue which somehow ... has been made into propaganda, a scapegoat, rather than a serious issue."

The United States is also strongly opposed to the \$800 million contract Russia signed in January to complete Iran's first nuclear power plant, a long-suspended project.

Russia wants Israel to sign the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) which comes up for renewal later this month.

But Mr. Rabin told Mr. Kozyrev that Israel would not join the pact until it had

signed peace "with all Arab countries as well as Iran," an official said.

The Jewish state has never confirmed reports that it has 200 nuclear warheads. It says it has special security needs so long as countries such as Iraq and Iran threatened its very existence.

Mr. Rabin renewed accusations that Iran "organises international terrorism" and said he was "unhappy" about the state of Iranian-Russian relations.

Mr. Kozyrev and Mr. Rabin also discussed the Israeli-Syrian track of the peace process in 1997.

Mr. Rabin said any peace treaty with Syria must include "the demarcation of the border, a timetable for an Israeli withdrawal, a normalisation of relations after the first phase of the withdrawal and security arrangements."

Mr. Kozyrev's Middle East tour hit problems Sunday when he cancelled three meetings with Israeli

leaders without any explanation.

He had been due to hold talks with Trade and Industry Minister Micha Harish, Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin and Ehud Olmert, the Israeli mayor of Jerusalem.

An Israeli foreign ministry spokesman attributed the cancellations to a lack of coordination in preparing the visits.

Mr. Kozyrev said Saturday he held "warm and positive" talks with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat in the self-rule Gaza Strip.

He said after two hours of talks: "We know that Mr. Arafat's task of promoting peace and securing international recognition is difficult, but Russia is going to support (him) until he succeeds."

Mr. Arafat stressed that Russia had an important role to play in the peace process.

Mr. Kozyrev met President Weizman on Sunday to discuss "new ideas" in the peace process.

Egypt admits Israel cannot sign NPT now

CAIRO (AFP) — Egypt recognises that Israel cannot join the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) immediately, a senior advisor to President Hosni Mubarak said in remarks published on Sunday.

"Our purpose is to motivate Israel to take some concrete steps towards joining. We recognise the fact that it may not be feasible for Israel to join right away," Osama Al Baz, Mr. Mubarak's political advisor, told the English weekly Middle East Times.

"We don't want to embarrass the Israeli government. We are not trying to put them in a corner, we are not trying to weaken them. We want them to convince us that they have a serious programme for joining" the treaty, he added.

Egypt, along with several other Arab states, refuses an unlimited extension of the nuclear pact, to be discussed this month at the United Nations, unless Israel commits to joining.

Mr. Mubarak arrived Sunday in Washington for talks

with President Bill Clinton, in which the NPT is expected to be a central topic.

The United States has pressured Egypt to accept an unlimited and unconditional renewal of the treaty.

"Our votes in the renewal process depends on what happens between now and then. Universally, we are for the renewal," Dr. Baz said.

"We don't want to spoil a universal application of the treaty because of our regional concerns. But on the other hand, we know it cannot be universal if a nation or a group of nations are allowed to be exempted," he said.

Dr. Baz insisted Egypt's goal was to strengthen the treaty and that its position was not "an anti-Israeli policy."

"We want to convince all nations in the region to cooperate with us in freeing the area of all weapons of mass destruction."

Israel, which western experts say possesses 200 nuclear warheads, insists a regional peace must be con-

cluded before it will sign the NPT. It says it is still threatened by countries such as Iran, Iraq and Libya.

Dr. Baz rejected the argument, adding that "all countries in the region should be treated on equal footing. Iran cannot be asked to do certain measures without asking others."

"Many Arabs will not feel secure enough if they think that a few kilometres from their borders there are reactors that are working within a military nuclear programme," he said.

Without the Jewish state's commitment, "Arabs might feel that Israel has a hidden agenda and we do not want this to persist in the minds of Arabs," he added.

International Cooperation Minister Yousef Boutros Ghali said Sunday the United States will maintain its aid to Egypt for at least the next three years with no reduction.

"The American aid will continue for a long time,"

tained, there will be no reduction over the next three years at least," he told the government weekly Rose Al Yousef.

Egypt is the second main beneficiary of U.S. aid after Israel with \$2.1 billion a year.

Dr. Ghali added that "if aid is reduced, it should be accompanied by a reduction in the aid granted to Israel."

Dr. Baz said Egypt needed the aid to continue at the same level for the next 10-15 years.

Dr. Baz told the Middle East Times: "This is the period that is needed to complete our economic reform programme, after which time we wouldn't like to burden the Americans or use their taxpayers' money."

U.S. Vice President Al Gore who visited Cairo on March 19 and 20 assured Egyptian leaders that the aid would be maintained for the 1996 financial year.

Mr. Mubarak has said he is sure American aid will continue for "a long time."

Bahraini cleric under house arrest

MANAMA (Agencies) — A prominent Shiite Muslim preacher whose apparent seizure by security authorities Saturday sparked a riot in Bahrain has been placed under house arrest, a family member and opposition groups said Sunday.

Two men were killed in clashes with security forces who went to the home of Sheikh Abdul Ameer Al Jamri, said a neighbour, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Five other protesters were wounded in the clashes in the suburb of Beni Jamra, he said.

There was no official confirmation of the casualties or any official word on why Sheikh Jamri, 55, was put under house arrest.

But the former member of the parliament which was dissolved in 1975 has been demanding the restoration of the legislature and more jobs for Bahraini Shiites.

The government said meanwhile it had arrested unidentified suspects accused of killing a policeman and a Pakistani shop assistant and of carrying out acts of sabotage.

The official Gulf News Agency, quoting an official source at the Interior Minis-

try, said police had arrested suspects who on Thursday lobbed a petrol bomb into a police jeep. One policeman was burned to death and two were injured in the incident at Sitra, Bahrain's third largest island.

It said police had also arrested suspects who had torched a video shop in Daib village on March 25. Pakistani shop assistant Mohammad Qareer was burned to death in the incident.

A third group responsible for an arson attack on a bank branch in Jidhafs village had been arrested, it added.

Investigations and confessions by those arrested showed their aim was to create chaos and instability in Bahrain and undermine its security, the source was quoted as saying.

"The Ministry of Interior... assures citizens and (foreign) residents that it stands ready to act against those saboteurs to defeat them and end their criminal acts and of those who stand behind them either by inciting or planning those acts," the source was quoted as saying.

The statement did not say how many suspects were arrested in what appears to be the biggest crackdown on

protesters since anti-government unrest erupted in Bahrain in early December.

The trouble triggered by the police move against Sheikh Jamri at dawn Saturday was the first in Beni Jamra, a Shiite suburb.

Residents said Saturday that Mr. Jamri was taken to prison. It was not clear whether the authorities decided to keep him under house arrest in an attempt to prevent further trouble, or whether that had been their intention in the first place. But the violence undermined the sensitivity of the situation.

Beni Jamra remained under security surveillance Sunday, with many residents staying indoors in case trouble flared again.

The violence has escalated in recent weeks and spread to schools and universities.

The Education Ministry has advanced mid-term holidays for colleges by several weeks, but schools remain open.

There were no reports of clashes Sunday, but a car showroom displaying Rolls Royce, Jaguar and Peugeot autos was gutted by fire. Residents said it was set alight by agitators Saturday night. Works, Power and Water

Minister Majid Al Jishi was quoted in newspapers Sunday as saying that 40 electricity sub-stations have been wrecked and 100 sub-stations and connecting boxes damaged by protesters in recent weeks, with damage estimated at 900,000 dinars (\$2.3 million).

He said a high-voltage cable which runs over the Sitra bridge and links the Riffa power station with the Manama plant has been sabotaged.

Repairs will cost one million dinars (\$2.65 million), he said.

The sporadic unrest, mainly confined to Shiite Muslim villages around Manama, has so far failed to significantly affect business life in the country. But it appears to have become a regular feature of night life in some villages.

The Interior Ministry statement made no mention of fires and blasts, apparently caused by gas cylinder explosions on Saturday night, or of reports of arrests and casualties in Beni Jamrah village.

Three clergymen were reported by residents to have been detained in the village and at least one person was killed and 16 were wounded in clashes with police.

Americans in Iraq get 1 month to appeal

BAGHDAD (AP) — Two Americans jailed for illegally entering Iraq have been given up to one month to appeal their eight-year prison sentences, instead of the usual two weeks, sources reported Sunday.

But there was no indication of an early release. The legal procedures for that could take up to three months, Iraqi law experts and officials close to the case said. They spoke on condition of anonymity.

The United States has appealed for the release of David Daliberti, 41, and William Barloon, 39, since their arrest March 13.

But on March 25, they were convicted by a Baghdad court of illegally entering Iraq.

U.S. officials say the pair crossed the southern border with Kuwait by accident on their way to visit friends at a U.N. border post.

A senior Iraqi official, Hassab Al Oubaidi of the Foreign Relations Department, suggested Saturday

the issue of the Americans could be settled "in the coming few days." But he did not elaborate.

Legal experts said Mr. Daliberti and Mr. Barloon must present all relevant papers and documents to the appeals court when they ask for a review of their sentences.

Still, they saw it as a positive sign that the authorities had extended the normal 14-day appeal period after Mr. Daliberti informed the court that his passport was in Kuwait, where he worked for a U.S. defence contractor.

He also said the passport had a valid Iraqi visa, the officials said.

The Americans have been given a list of Iraqi lawyers to choose from for their appeal.

U.S. officials have been working to secure the men's release through the Polish embassy, which handles American interests in Baghdad in the absence of direct U.S.-Iraqi diplomatic relations.

Iraqi officials, like Mr. Oubaidi, have made vaguely hopeful remarks, while others and government-run newspapers have taken tougher lines that have made it difficult to discern what the official line is on the jailed Americans.

For instance, Al Qadisiyah, the Defence Ministry's daily, said Sunday that they are no different from Mexicans trying to immigrate illegally to the United States.

It criticised what it called "the spasms of American officials towards Iraq's legal stance in punishing the Americans who sneaked into its national territory."

"American television channels from time to time show scenes of how Mexican citizens are arrested while trying to cross the border without permission," the newspaper said.

"They are thrown on the ground, their hands tied behind their backs, and then detained, interrogated and later tried for this crime."

"Where is the problem... as long as each country is implementing its laws?" Al Qadisiyah asked.

Iraq's foreign minister, Mohammad Saeed Al Sahaf, noted Thursday that he did not believe that two Americans entered Iraq accidentally, but must have had a darker motive.

The Polo Mint Company took out advertisements announcing that European regulations had decreed that their popular mints with holes must be filled. Euro-tunnel said it was looking for artists to paint murals along the walls of the Channel tunnel and the Eyecare Information Service said a survey showed that eye tests make people sex mad. The Daily Mail newspaper claimed Egyptian archaeologists had discovered a 4,603-year-old teddy bear in an ancient toy cupboard while excavating the Pyramid of Cheops near Cairo. The respected Lancet medical journal reported that young doctors were becoming pathologically attached to their stethoscopes, wearing them while driving, during meals and even when asleep. Toy firm Little Tikes said it was launching a lifestyle magazine for the under-fives, while in the strictly adult category Wonderbra claimed it had developed a talking bra that said: "Hello, boys."

Column 8

Russian April Fool's jokes have sharp edge

MOSCOW (R) — The Russian media clearly relished post-Soviet press freedoms on April Fool's Day, spoofing sensitive issues such as war in Chechnya and poverty. One Moscow daily published in ironic would-be exposure saying that Russian intelligence had replaced Chechen leader Dzhokhar Dudayev with a lookalike when the head of the breakaway region fell ill last year. The presumed double, a driver at a vegetable farm, supposedly took a liking to powder, however, and sparked the armed conflict between Chechnya and Russian which has cost thousands of lives, the popular Moskovsky Komsomolets said. The proof of the switch was in the size of a front-page satire unimaginable before the break-up of the Soviet Union. The radio station Ekho Moskvy

stated painful memories by airing a report that the government was giving Russians until Monday to turn over savings of hard currency to the state. Soviet leaders in the past had periodically frozen bank accounts or withdrawn large bills from circulation, robbing people of years of savings in the name of monetary reform. ITAR-TASS news agency said a similar gag by a newspaper in the town of Lipetsk had ended badly, when many readers believed a report that new money was replacing the rouble. Panicking, they rushed out and spent all their savings. Other April Fool's Day jokes were more light-hearted. In Russia, one TASS report said, Siberian hunters had found a latter-day mowgli hibernating in a cave with a family of bears. But in neighbouring Ukraine, newspapers based jokes mainly on money and the poverty to which most of the country's 52 million residents have been subjected in the post-Soviet era. Vsesukrainskye Vedomosti reported on its front page that large numbers of counterfeit \$100 bills had been seized — and displayed one bearing serial numbers with Russian letters.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Saudis in Yemen for border talks

SANAA (R) — A Saudi Arabian military team arrived in Sanaa on Sunday to hold a second round of talks on a long-standing border dispute. Sanaa Radio said. The joint military committee, set up under a memorandum Yemen and Saudi Arabia signed in February, is trying to resolve a 60-year-old border dispute. The memorandum provides for committees to demarcate land and sea borders and prevent troop movements in the potentially oil-rich border area. The two sides agreed on the memorandum after trading accusations of troop build-ups and border clashes in December and January. During their talks, the officials, who held the first round in Saudi Arabia earlier this year, will focus on military issues outlined by the memorandum. Sanaa Radio said.

39 suspected extremists held in Egypt

CAIRO (AP) — Police have arrested 24 suspected Muslim extremists for attacks with explosive devices in Cairo in February during Ramadan, police officials said Sunday. The 24 were ordered jailed for 15 days for investigation, said the officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity. They gave no further details. In another development, police in Samalout, 200 kilometres south of Cairo, detained 15 militants suspected of participating in attacks Friday on a Coptic church and a train station. Two policemen were killed and three people were wounded in the attacks. Also Sunday, state prosecutor Hisham Saraya announced that 15 other militants were indicted for attempting to kill a policeman and Christian civilians last June in Beni Suef, 100 kilometres south of Cairo. Four of the suspects remain at large. The date of the trial has not been set yet.

4 beheaded for drugs in Saudi Arabia

RIYADH (AP) — Two Pakistanis and an Afghan were beheaded Sunday in Riyadh after Islamic courts convicted them of drug smuggling, the Interior Ministry announced. Saudi Arabia is governed by Islamic law, which prescribes beheading for murder, rape and "crimes that spread corruption on earth." Saudi theologians in 1987 extended beheading to drug smuggling. Some 50 beheadings have taken place this year. Executions usually are carried out in public squares near mosques.

Whale of a catch in Egypt

CAIRO (AFP) — Fishermen in the Sinai port of El Arish have netted a two-tonne whale, the biggest ever to be caught in Egypt, the government daily Al Ahran reported Sunday. The fishermen chopped the 10-metre creature into pieces to take to the town's market where it sold out within minutes for a total price of \$2,500, the paper said. Inhabitants of El Arish, 300 kilometres west of Cairo on the Mediterranean coast, believe whale-meat is good for virility.

Kuwait deputies slams liberals

KUWAIT (R) — An Islamist parliamentarian has lashed out at Kuwait's liberals, saying they violate the principles of Islam and embrace Western values, a newspaper reported on Sunday. "Those who describe themselves as liberals do not respect any issue based on Sharia (Islamic law)," deputy Ahmad Baqer told Al Anbaa newspaper in an interview. "They mock every Islamic matter and take pride in any Western thing and regard it as divine, even if it is bad." His remarks were the latest in a verbal war between Islamists who want Kuwait to become a strict Islamic state and liberals who are open to Western influence. Mr. Baqer also laid part of the blame on Islamist government officials for their inability to curb Western influences. "What do the religious brothers in the government do? Don't they see the catastrophic programmes broadcast by (the state) television? There is not a single song broadcast by television without a dancing woman. Does that conform with the Islamic Sharia?"

Manila detains 6 reportedly linked to New York blast

MANILA (Agencies) — Six Arabs were arrested and a large quantity of weapons and explosives seized in a raid early Sunday on an apartment in a Manila suburb, police said. Police linked them to defendants in the 1993 World Trade centre bombing.

Earlier, police said a Pakistani businessman suspected of ties to the alleged mastermind of the New York City bombing also had been arrested. Later, they said he would be charged with investment fraud, although they still believed he was tied to the alleged mastermind, Ramzi Yousef.

Yousef eluded arrest in Manila in January in what police said was a plot to kill Pope John Paul II and blow up U.S. airliners over the Pacific. He was apprehended a month later in Pakistan and deported to the United States, where he was charged

in the February 1993 bombing that killed six people and injured about 1,000.

Police said the six Arabs, including a Syrian, a Lebanese, two Jordanians, an Omani and a United Arab Emirates national, were arrested in suburban Kalookan City and will be charged with illegal weapons possession.

Police also recovered a large amount of weapons and explosives, including pistols, rifles, detonating cord, dynamite, timers, ammonium nitrate and computer diskettes. Officials said others were being sought, including Filipinos, Sudanese and Jordanians.

A statement said the "apprehended Muslim extremists are believed to be affiliated" with Sheikh Omar Abdul Rahman, the blind cleric on trial in New York in the World Trade Centre blast. No other details were

released.

Police sources, speaking on condition of anonymity, said investigators seized tape cassettes of sermons by Sheikh Omar.

Those arrested were said to be members of the heretofore unknown "Islamic Saturday Meeting Group." About 10 per cent of the country's 66 million people are Muslims.

Officials said they were also believed linked to Yousef, who was charged here last week in the December bombing of a Philippine Airlines jet in which a Japanese passenger was killed.

Yousef was also believed to have been plotting to kill the Pope during his visit here in January and planning to blow up United Airlines planes over the Pacific.

The plots were uncovered when police raided his apartment Jan. 6 after a suspicious fire. Yousef managed to slip

away in the confusion.

Police identified the Pakistani businessman as Tariq Rana. Rana eluded arrest last Thursday when police raided his office in Makati looking for documents in a multimillion-dollar investment swindle. He was arrested Saturday in suburban Makati.

Police said he was believed to have provided support to the Filipino Muslim Abu Sayayf group, which worked with Yousef in Manila and may have helped him escape.

"Sheikh former CIA agent"

Sheikh Abdul Rahman was an agent for the CIA, a senior Egyptian official said in remarks published Sunday.

It is not time that a leading Egyptian official has openly voiced concerns about the blind cleric's connections with the LA which have long circled around in the

pro-government press.

"Why do you think